

RC
THE
DEVOUT CLIENT
OF
MARY

INSTRUCTED

In the Motives and Means how to Honour and serve Her, in the best manner.

Written in Italian

By R. F. Paul Segneri &

Of the Society of JESUS.

AND

Translated into English by N. N.



Permissu Superiorum.

THE
DEVOUT

MAR



AN
A P O L O G Y
For the Author.

By the Translator.

I Presume to present the Publick with an English Translation of a small Italian Treatise, but of a very great Author. I may truly call it a Presumption, whether I consider the Author, or my self. As to the Author, his Character is so well known in *Italy* by his Eloquent Writings, that to name a *Segneri* there, is as much as to say the *Chrysostom*, or golden Mouth of his Age. And as to my self, having lived the greatest part of my Life in forreign Countries, I am so conscious of my little Skill in my own Language, that had it not been for the Persuasion of Friends, but more for the Honour of the Virgin and the Benefit of her Devout Clients in *England*, I had certainly never ventur'd upon an Enterprize so far above my Forces; being truly sensible that it cannot but be an Injury to an Ingenious Author and Master of his own Language, to be forced to speak in a forreign one, by a Pen any thing inferiour to his own. However, I hope the kind Reader will be easy in pardoning my faults, upon the Assurance I give him, that my only Design in publishing this little Book, is to communicate unto him the Good it has already done, and daily continues to do in the Country where it had its first Birth; and that I shall look upon my self to be over and above rewarded for my Labour, if the Substance of the Book have its intended Effect, whatever

ever the Reader's Thoughts may be of the Accidental or Ornamental part of it: I mean, if it will inspire his Soul with noble Sentiments and great Ideas of the incomparable Virgin *Mary*, and inflame his Heart with a tender Devotion towards Her, whether the Style, the Phrase, or the Language have the good Fortune to please him or not.

If this Book were only to fall into the Hands of Catholick Readers, 'twould be needless for me to say any more by way of a Preface, than barely to recommend unto them the Reading of it, in order to raise in their Minds a great Opinion of the Excellencies, Sanctity, and Merits of the Virgin *Mary* above all other pure Creatures, and to improve in their Hearts that tender Affection and Devotion towards Her, which the Religion they profess inclines them to; and which might otherwise slacken in them, if the Reasons and Motives thereof were not sometimes propos'd unto them, by way of refreshing the Memory. Catholicks are never afraid of hearing too much in Commendation of *Mary*, when nothing is said that goes beyond the limits of a Creature. They know that the Quality of *Mother of God* intitles her to any Greatness under God himself. They know that all the Honour that can be pay'd to a pure Creature, is justly due to *Mary*. They know that her Power, her Intercession, her Protection, tho' of no Force nor Value without the Merits, and Mediation of *Jesus Christ*, yet next to Him and by Him, are the most efficacious Means we have to Salvation. All this they know and believe; because they have been so taught by the Church it self from its very Infancy, by a constant and uninterrupted Tradition, and by the Universal Practice thereof to this very Day.

But

But because this Book is for all, and Protestants are as heartily invited to read it as others, in hopes it may do them some good, I am confident no harm; it may be thought convenient that I should say something, in order to prevent some Objections, which the Protestant Reader may make to some startling Propositions, Expressions, Titles, Prerogatives, and Encomiums, which are appropriated to the Virgin by the Author throughout his whole Treatise: and which may seem exorbitant and injurious to God and to *Jesus Christ*, not only to Protestants, but also to some Catholics, especially the less learned: as likewise to remove some other Prejudices, which Protestants may have conceiv'd against the Catholick Doctrine and Practice in general of Honouring the Saints, and praying to them. A prejudice altogether groundless and purely taken upon Trust, and for want of knowing our true meaning, at least in the Common of Protestants; who are made to believe that by praying to Saints, we make so many Divinities of them; Whereas, alas, there is as much difference in proportion, between our praying to God and praying to the Saints, even the Virgin *Mary* her self, worshipping of God, and honouring the Saints, as there is between God and the Saints.

First therefore, I must desire all my Readers, whether Catholics or Protestants, who may be surpris'd at any Thing they find in this Book, to consider that *Seguers* writ it in a Catholick Country, and in the very Center of the Roman Religion, where he was in no Danger of being taxed with saying too much in favour of the Virgin, as long as he advanced nothing contrary to Faith: And yet, where he would not have escaped the Censure of those whole Business it is to examine Books, had
any

any such Thing been found in his. Wherefore it is reasonable to conclude, that tho' he speaks never so magnificently of the Virgin Mary, or in Terms which may seem too exaggerated, yet he advances nothing but what is perfectly conformable to the Doctrine of the Church. Now, as *Segneri* never imagined that this Book would appear in England among People of a different Persuasion, He was not so much upon his guard, to measure his Expressions, but gave full scope to his zeal and Eloquence, without ever suspecting that he might meet with many learned Adversaries to impugn his Doctrine, and consequently did not prepare for any such ingagement. However, tho' he has not writ in a Polemical way, yet the Reader will find he has not been wanting to himself even in this point; Since he advances nothing, either for certain or for probable, but what he supports with very authentick Testimonies of Scripture, Tradition, Holy Fathers, Practice of the Church, and the best Divines, all common Sources of Theological Arguments, and of all Authority upon Earth in matters of Religion and Doctrine. So that, if any one should find any fault with *Segneri*, he must not attack him but his Vouchers; and my saying any more in his Defence may seem a needless Undertaking. However to give all reasonable Satisfaction to any Scrupulous Reader, I shall endeavour to supply what *Segneri* thought unnecessary, and explain all those points where there may appear any difficulty.

The Protestant Reader doubtless will think that *Segneri* makes the Virgin too great, both as to her Sanctity, and as to her Power, when by using such Expressions, as, *Bordering upon the Divinity; Little less than Omnipotent; Mediatrix between God and Man's Reparer of our Losses*

Essep. Helper in the Redemption, and the like, he seems to insinuate that if he durst but speak the word, he would call her a Deity. Before I answer this general Objection, I beg leave to ask any Protestant, if he can give us the just Measure of *Mary's* Greatness, of her Sanctity, of her Power. If he has had in his Hand that golden Rod mention'd in the Apocalypse, to take the Dimensions of the *longum, latum, and profundum*, the Length, Breadth, and Depth of that Mystical City of God, let him give us an exact Survey of it, and we shall thank him for his labour. But if we find that the Structure he raises does not answer the Basis of her being the Mother of God, and Full of Grace in any just Proportion, he will, I hope, give us leave to tell him that tho' he may be very well skill'd in the Principles of Geometry and Architecture upon our inferior Globe, yet he is not altogether Master of those which belong to mystical Uranometry.

It is true, *Sylvest.* magnifies the Virgin *Mary* to a very great Degree. But in this he only Copies after the Holy Fathers, as I said before; and advances nothing in this kind, tho' never so seemingly hyperbolical, but what he cites his Authority for out of some of them: Nay, oftentimes he mollifies their Expressions, and takes off the appearance of Hyperbole, which weaker Capacities might be offended at. So that, to imagine that he should ever pretend to put up the Virgin *Mary* for a Divinity, whatever Expressions he uses when he speaks of her Sanctity or of her Power, cannot be without a very great Injury to the Learning and Piety of so great a Man. On the contrary, he is so cautious in this point, and so far from attributing any Divine Power or Perfection to the Virgin, that in several Places

Places of his Book, nay, I may say, in every one where he has Occasion to speak of her excessive Greatness and Power, he positively declares and protests that he acknowledges her for no more than a pure Creature. Now, tho' we all know that it is not in the Power even of God himself to make another God, yet it is certainly in his Power to communicate of his Sanctity, of his Perfections, and of his Power to his Creatures as much as he thinks good. And how far this can go, without Deifying that Creature, so as it might ever be said; One degree more of Sanctity, one degree more of Perfection, or one degree more of Power will make a God of her, I believe no one that knows the Nature of Infinity, especially in God, will venture to determine. Wherefore Segneri thought he had very good Reason to attribute any limited Sanctity, and any limited Power to the Blessed Virgin, without danger of entrenching upon the Divinity, as long as he had the Church for his Warrant, and the Holy Fathers for his Guides. And if he has placed her, as Queen of Heaven, in a Rank above all other Creatures, and allows her an Honour superiour to that which is pay'd to other Saints and Angels in Heaven, he follows herein the same foot-steps, and only Eccho's to the common Voice of all the Catholick Church. And yet this Rank and this Honour, whatever name may be given to it, is still acknowledged by the Author and by all Catholicks, to be infinitely inferior to God.

I shall now proceed to examine some of those Expressions which seem to shock the most.

In the first Part, Chap. 1. page 23. Segneri says, that *this glorious Queen alone* (the Virgin Mary) *is dearer to her Divine spouse than all the rest*

rest of his Heavenly Court. This cannot well be conceived, without supposing that her Sanctity is superior to that of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven together. And *Securi* indeed not only supposes it, but proves it afterwards very learnedly. However, this not only looks like a rash Assertion, but even seems to be a flat Contradiction to what Christ himself says in Saint Matt. 11. 11. *Non surrexit inter natos mulierum major Johanne Baptista*. Among the born of Women, there arose not a greater than John Baptist. But any one that considers the Circumstances those words were spoken in, will easily find they were not absolute, so as to prefer the Baptist above all other men whatsoever in personal Sanctity; for in this, to say nothing of the Virgin, the Apostles were at least his Equals; but they were relative to his Dignity of Precursor, and Office of Prophet, in which he was certainly the greatest that ever was born from the Beginning, to the ending of the old Law, when Christ began the new. This appears first, because Christ was speaking of St. John's being not only a Prophet, but more than a Prophet, even an Angel. 2dly, Because Saint Luke 7. 28. expressly adds the word Prophet. *There is no greater Prophet than John Baptist, among the Born of Women*. 3dly, Because this is the Interpretation of St. Ambrose, and St. Hilary, cited by Cardinal Tollet, and Cornelius à Lapide; and even the protestant Bible gives the same Interpretation. Finally by the following words of the same Text, it is manifest that personal Sanctity was not the subject of the Preference, for Christ says immediately after, *that the lowest in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than He*. Wherefore *Securi*'s Assertion supported by the Authority of St. Augustin, St. Bonaventure, St. Anselm, and particularly in those words which he

he cites pag. 109. *quā nequeat major intelligi sub Deo*; that a greater Sanctity than *Mary's* cannot be conceiv'd under God, may stand good for all this Objection, or any other of this nature.

As to what he says pag. 25. of the Virgin's being the First-born of pure Creatures in the Three Orders of Nature, Grace, and Glory, he proves it sufficiently himself, in the Three following Paragraphs upon that subject. And if any one should startle at those notable Words of Saint Bernard, with which he confirms his Opinion, *Propter hanc totus Mundus factus est*. For her all the World was made; as strange and altogether incredible, he need only to reflect that they are no stranger now than they were in Saint Bernard's own days, when the Church was as zealous for God's honour, as he was for the Virgin's: and if the meaning of them, viz. of a secondary End in respect of *Jesus Christ*, and always subordinate to him, were not found to be very Orthodox, and no ways injurious to God or to *Christ*, they would never have passed without correction.

If what Segneri says pag. 45. of the Virgin's being not only the greatest, but even the only Work God had in View, when he designed to take upon him humane flesh, have any Error in it, it must not be imputed to Segneri, but to Saint Ildefonsus, who expressly says, *Virgo, Mater Dei, solum opus Incarnationis Dei mei*. And yet it appears nowhere that the Church ever found fault with that Expression of St. Ildefonsus. However Segneri does not adopt it in those positive terms, but gives it a very mollifying Explication; And tho' upon that occasion he says, that *Mary* was a Work worthy of the infinite Treasure of the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, yet he is far from

from meaning a worthiness of Merit or Equality with that Divine Blood, but only of an Excess or superiority of Worthiness above the rest of Mankind, that that precious Blood should be shed for her. For if all other Men, tho' infected with Original sin, were thought by the Divine Mercy worthy of the Redemption, certainly the Virgin who was free from Original sin, was much more worthy of it: Where it is plain that the Word *Worth* or *Worthiness* cannot signify *Merit* or *Equality* either in the Virgin, or in the rest of Mankind, but only that both the Virgin, and all other Men were look'd upon by Almighty God as worthy Objects of his Divine Mercy, the Virgin of his Preservative Mercy, and the other Mortals of his Reparative Mercy.

When *Segneri* pag. 53. says after *St. John Damascen*, that there is an infinite distance between the Mother of God and the other Servants of God: Neither he, nor *Saint John Damascen* mean it in the absolute signification of the word *Infinite*: Since nothing but God, absolutely speaking, is at an infinite distance from Creatures: but only as it is frequently used in common Discourse upon any other subject, in which the Word *Infinite* often comes in, only to signify a prodigious Excess; as when we say, an infinite Number of People, or, I am infinitely obliged to you. Besides, this way of speaking will meet with no Difficulty with those who hold *Infinisum* in Created things to be possible. Where *Segneri* lays, page 61. that *Mary* is in a manner as incomprehensible to any Created Intellect, as God himself, he only means as to her Dignity of Mother of God, as it appears evidently by what he says pag. 63. that she her self, as great as she was, could not comprehend her own Greatness; because she could not conceive

ceive with her Understanding, how great a Thing it was to receive a God within her Womb. And in this, *Segneri* has a great deal of Reason, since the Divine Maternity makes a considerable part of the Mystery of the Incarnation, which no body doubts to be absolutely Incomprehensible to all created Understandings.

But the boldest Expression, in my Opinion, in all the Book, is what he cites out of *St. Peter Damian*, pag. 67. Where he says that God is in the Virgin by Identity. Here indeed the Protestant may say, that to be identified with God, or to be one and the same thing with God, and not to be God blessed for ever more, is a hard thing to be conceiv'd. *Durus est hic sermo*. Who can have patience to hear it? And if it be inconceivable, then by a good Protestant principle, at least in many other points, it must never be believed. To this I answer first, that precisely its being inconceivable, is not enough to make it incredible, as in the Mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. I answer adly, that in reality this is no harder to conceive, than it is to conceive how a Virgin can be the Mother of God, and yet I suppose no Protestant will allow this to be incredible. Thirdly I answer, that whatever Theological Interpretation may be given to those words of *St. Peter Damian*, so as not to Deify the Virgin, it is enough for the Vindication of my Author, that he builds no further upon them, than to allow such an Identity between the Virgin and *Jesus Christ*, as between the Tree and the fruit, with *Saint Thomas*; and that the flesh of *Christ* is truly the flesh of *Mary*, with *Saint Augustin*. *Caro Christi est Caro Mariae*.

The Expression of *bordering upon the Divinity*, which I mention'd in the Beginning, and which occurs

occurs, page 69. is but the English to Saint Thomas his Latin, *finis Divinitatis propinquus attingit*. And, confining upon God, is *Cajetan's* Interpretation of the same Saint Thomas his, *Affinem Deo*: Now, if *Segneri* upon this, calls the Virgin God's Relation and Kinswoman, I think he comes nearer to St. Thomas his meaning, at least nearer the sense of that word *Affinis*; which after all, is no more than calling her his Mother. But our Ears and Fancy being accustomed to the Word *Mother*, when we speak of the Virgin with reference to God, and not to the other Two words, is what makes them appear a little harsh, tho' Truth be equal in them all; since a Mother is certainly the nearest Relation and Kinswoman of any to her own Child. But in these Things Fancy must be corrected, rather than Truth should suffer.

The next thing that occurs, is, pag. 75. Where *Segneri* upon those Words, *Erat subditus illi*, meaning the Virgin Mary, and our Lord Jesus Christ, says it was his Duty to Obey her. This may seem a little hard, that it should be God's Duty to obey his own Creature. Yet the words of Scripture are plain, *subditus* signifies a Subject. And a Subject implies Obedience; and Obedience would not be Obedience in the rigour of the word, unless it were due, at least under some Title or another; for, the Titles of Subjection and Obedience, and consequently of Duty, as *Segneri* himself observes, are very different. Notwithstanding all this, he prudently declines the Opinion of Saint Bonaventura and other Divines who take the word *subditus* in the most rigorous sense of strict Subjection and strict Obedience, and makes it no more than a Subjection of Piety, according to what Saint Ambrose says of it, (L. 2. in c. 2. Luc.) *Nunquid humano egebat auxilio, ut Mater non serviret Imperio?* Was it that Christ stood in need

need of humane help, that he lay under a Necessity of Obeying the Command of his Mother? No, says this holy Doctor, and Primitive Father. 'Twas no more than a voluntary Subjection of Piety, not of Weakness or Infirmitiy. *Non utique infirmitatis, sed Pietatis ista Subjectio est.* And this is all that Segneri pretends, who thinks it Honour enough for the Virgin, that God should voluntarily obey her in effect, as much as if he were strictly her Subject. And thus he is also to be understood, when he speaks of the same Obedience, in the 2d Part, page 308.

As to what he says, page 79. of the Virgin's Meriting *de Congruo* the Dignity of the Divine Maternity, and not *de Condigno*, he makes his party so good himself, that he does not stand in need of a Second. Wherefore I shall only caution the Reader against an Error which he may easily fall into, if he is not much accustomed to those School Terms: by thinking that Segneri contradicts himself afterwards, when he says, page 82. that she disposed her self *de Condigno* to receive God within her Womb. For, this Disposition *de Condigno* is no more than a Merit *de Congruo*: that is, in Theological rigour, no Merit at all; but only a worthy or fit Disposition to receive either a Favour, or an Honour *gratis* given, and such as might equally not be given, without any Injury to the Person so disposed.

There are here and there in the Book some Expressions, as if the whole Omnipotence, or the whole strength of the Al-powerful Arm were employ'd in making the Virgin so great as She is, or, as if God had need of all his Attention and all his Application, when he made Her; whereas in comparison of her, when he made the rest of the World, he did it *quasi blind agendo*, as if he had little or nothing to do.

These

These and such other like Expressions, can only seem strange to Understandings of a very narrow Sphere, and such as measure God's Power and his Works by Ells and Inches, as they measure their Cloth: But to People who are acquainted with the Phrases of the Scriptures, and the Language of the Fathers, and other sacred Orators, especially when they display their Eloquence, these are no Wonders. How often are the Effects of God's Power expressed in Scripture, some as the Work of his Fingers, others as the Work of his Hands, and others of his Arm; nay, and of his High and mighty Arm, *is Brachio excelsa*? And when in the 77 Psalm it is said, *non accendit omnem iram suam*! He did not kindle all his Wrath: Is God's Wrath more divisible into Parts and Degrees than his Power? No. There is no difference of Degrees in God's Attributes; all are equal, and all are infinite: The only difference is, in the Created Effects of them: and these are oftentimes much better understood, and better expressed by an Imaginary difference conceived to be in the Cause of them, than by any intrinsecal Perfection of their own, which we are seldom able to give an exact Account of. Wherefore, when God creates the World, or when he creates a Fly, he employs all the same Omnipotence: And 'tis a very gross way of understanding, to imagine that to Create a Man, so many real Degrees of Power are required, so many to create an Angel, and so many for the whole World. But intentionally, to divide the Omnipotence, by a pure Operation of the Understanding, and to say that so many intentional Degrees of it might be conceiv'd sufficient to produce an Effect of small Perfection, and so many more for a Thing of greater Perfection; and then conclude that the Perfections of the Virgin are so

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great

great, that the whole Complex of those Intentional Degrees may be necessary to the Production of Her, is so far from having any inconvenience or Absurdity in it, that the Reader will hardly find a better way to compare Created Perfections one with another.

As to all the third Chapter of the first Part, where he discourses at large, and very Theologically of the great Sanctity of *Mary*, and of the manner of her continually increasing her stock of Grace and Merit, both *ex Opere operato*, and *ex Opere operantis*, I may leave him to himself and to the Learned, who will easily understand the force of his Argumentation, and perchance not easily dissent from it. But if any one should think it amiss, that in such a serious Discourse he should bring in such vulgar Comparisons, as those of the Horse-shoe Nails, and the Chess-board Squares, he is desired to remember that *Segneri* did not write this little Book for the Learned only, but also for the unlearned, upon whom generally speaking such sort of Examples make a deeper impression, than the strongest Arguments,

The fidelity of a Translator, and the Character I have taken upon me of an Apologist, require I should disguise nothing, either in the Book, as I give it in English, or in its Original Italian, which may be liable to any Censure. Wherefore, I shall make no Mystery to own that *Segneri* often uses the Words *Adoring* and *Adoration*, when he speaks of the Honour and Worship that is due to the Virgin. But he is so far from understanding them in that sense in which they are only proper to God, that he has a whole Paragraph to shew the contrary, See the IV. Parag. Chap IV. Part. I. This word however I have left out in my Translation, except in page 148. where he speaks

speaks of the Angels adoring the Virgin, as the Mother of their common Lord, when that Mystery was reveal'd to them; because I did not suppose that any one would Tax the Angels with Idolatry: And here I declare that my leaving it out in other places, is not for any such suspicion which can be reasonably imputed to *Segneri*, as it is understood by him and all Catholics; but purely because it might sound a little too harsh in the tender Hearing of those, who do not know the different significations this word may be taken in, besides the principal one of Worship due unto God alone. It is no new thing for the same Word to signify different things, and to bear different Senses; there being no Language in the World so copious, as to furnish different Words for every different Thing, much less for every different Conception of things; which are in a manner Infinite, and which yet must have Words to express them, if we will communicate our Thoughts. Wherefore, till we come to talk like Angels, without the use of Words, it will be a necessity for some Words in all Languages, to bear different senses. And why this Word *Adoration* should not be such an one, since all Words are *signa ad placitum*, and of humane Institution, it will be hard to give a good Reason. If you say, 'tis because when a Word is once appropriated to signify any thing belonging to God, out of Respect to him, it is not fitting it should be apply'd to any thing else. I answer first, that this would cut off the use of a considerable part of our Words, which are equally applicable to God, and to Creatures, tho' in a far different sense, as, Good, Great, Wise, Powerful, Just, Merciful, with their Abstractions, Goodness, Greatness, Wisdom, Power, and the like. For, if it is not lawful to apply any of those Terms,

with innumerable others of the same Nature, to Creatures, because in their Principal signification they are only proper to God, we must have two Dictionaries, one to speak of God, and another to speak of his Creatures I answer secondly, that this very Word it self, *God*, which yet is so sacred, and the Thing meant by it so incommunicable, is not exempt from this diversity of signification. For, besides that it is frequently used in Poetry, and in Prose too, to signify the false Gods, as well as the true One, without always adding the Word, *false*, to shew the distinction; with what Truth could it be said of Men, by Truth it self *Dii estis Vos. Ye are Gods*; unless there were a sense, in which this Word might be applied to Creatures, without any Injury to God? 'Tis but opening the Bible, to find this word applied some Hundreds of times indifferently to God, to Angels, to Men, and even inanimated Things, as *Joseph's Sheave*, and the King's Throne, to say nothing of Idols. The Curiosity took me to look into the *Concordantia Biblicorum*, and before I could get to the end of the Kings, I found it no less than 30 times expressly applied to Men, or Angels. As it is said of God, it signifies the supreme Worship of *Latria*, and is the chief act of Religion. As it is apply'd to Idols, it signifies the same Worship pay'd to Creatures, and therefore is flat Idolatry: as it is applied to Angels, 'tis also a Religious Worship, but of an inferiour Rank: But as it is applied to Men upon Earth, 'tis no more than a pure civil Honour: And this single Latin Word *Adoro*, and Greek *προσκύνησις*, and English *Adore*, serves for all this: Tho' 'tis pleasant enough to see into how many Shapes and Circumlocutions the English Bibles turn the Phrase, purely to avoid this short and plain Word;

Word; One time it is, *doing Reverence*, another time it is, *falling on the ground*, another, *bowing the face to the ground*, or *Bowing and making Obeissance*: Nay, even when they speak of God, they will not say *Adore*, but *Worship*; whereby they artfully affect to insinuate that all *Worship* must be *Divine*; But by their good leave, the Word *Worship* is as capable of as many significations, as the Word *Adore*: Otherwise, *Squires*, *Gentlemen*, and *Justices of Peace*, must be no more, *Worshipful*, or, *Right worshipful*. Now I would ask, if this be a fair way of Translating the Bible, and a faithful and literal giving of the Scripture words, and not rather a Paraphrasing upon them, and explaining the manner or Method of that Action, which the Scripture in one Word calls *Adoring*; and this in the Text it self, which we believe to be never Lawful, but justly liable to the Curse in the Apocalypse upon all those, who shall add, or diminish any thing of the Word of God.

Before I leave this point, I cannot but observe, that it is a common Phrase in most Languages, to say, such an Officer, such a Courtier, such a Favourite is such a Prince's *Creature*. And yet we do not find that any one scruples at this Expression, as if thereby the Prince were made a *Creator*, in the proper and principal Sense of that Word; tho' 'tis very certain that those two Terms, *Creature*, and *Creator*, cannot be conceiv'd, without a Necessary Relation of one to the other Where therefore is the harm, in using the Word *Adore*, or *Adoration*, in the same manner, and as the Scripture it self uses it? But, if notwithstanding all this, Protestants are still resolved never to allow of these different Acceptions of those Words, we cannot help it. The most that can come of it, will be an endless Squabble about
Words

Words and Phrases. And as I am sure it will never make Catholicks one jot the more Idolaters, so I am much afraid it will never justify Protestants for separating from them upon that Account; For, I cannot think that the soberer sort of those Gentlemen are so conceited either of their own Learning, or of their Zeal for God's honour, above their Neighbours, as to think that no body can smell out Idolatry but themselves. And thus much for the Word *Adoration*, and particularly for those, who, if they understand Italian, may read *Segneri* himself, that they may not be surpris'd at the Expression, nor think me unfaithful in my Translation for concealing that Word, as if I were afraid to let it appear in English: Since I have both justified the use of it, and given a good Reason at the same time, for leaving it out.

In the 2d Paragraph of the V. Chap. Part. I. *Segneri* seems to carry the Greatness and Power of the Virgin to an Excess not to be tolerated in any pure Creature, and which cannot but be injurious to the Creator himself, and to *Jesus Christ*; when by these words of *Richardus a Sancto Victore*, pag. 190. *Salus omnium per ipsam facta est, Unde & Mundi Salus dicta est*, he makes her in a manner equal to *Jesus Christ* in the Redemption of Mankind, by calling her the Salvation of the World; as if the World was saved by her Means. The same may be said of all those other Titles, of Repairer of our Losses, Mediatrix between God and Man, and the Channel of all those Graces of which *Christ* alone is the Source; of her receiving from *Christ* the Arbitrary Disposition of all the Effects which were to redound unto us from his Mercy. pag. 197. Of her being admitted to share with *Jesus Christ* in the Application of the Merits of his Sacrifice upon the Cross.

Cross, pag. 200; all which he deduces as so many Consequences from the double Merit which she contracted with the Divine Mercy, in the Incarnation and Passion of *Jesus Christ* pag. 191. and from her being a secondary Meritorious Cause of the Redemption. Finally his making the Virgin enter so deeply into the inscrutable Mystery of our Predestination, as to be not only an infallible Sign of it, to all her Devout Clients: but even so immediately concurring to it, as if it could not have any Effect without her, according to those Remarkable words of Saint *Anselm*: *Sicut impossibile &c* pag. 240. which signify in short, that Salvation is impossible without her Interposition, and Damnation impossible with it. All this, and a great deal more of this kind, which the Book is full of, seems so monstrously exaggerating, and exalts the Virgin so far beyond Reason and Faith, that the Protestant Reader must be very modest indeed, not to cry out Blasphemy upon the Author of such extravagant Propositions.

To all this I might Answer, that *Segneri* is sufficiently discharged from all imputation of Blasphemy, or even Exaggeration, by the very Names of the H. Fathers and other Authors he cites to support his Assertions. Names so well known to the Learned, and whose Reputation is so well establish'd in the World for Learning, Sanctity, and zeal for the Truth, some Ages before the Birth of Protestantism, that the present Opposition of never so many revolted from the Church can never diminish their Authority; Especially since none of the other H. Fathers their Contemporaries, or even followers in the Church, among so many learned and zealous Men, Popes, Bishops, Doctors and Divines, nay, even General Councils too, have ever found the least fault, or symptom of

of Blasphemy in any thing they have left written relating to the Virgin *Mary*

But, to give all reasonable Satisfaction in this point, and not to insist purely upon Authority, which I am sensible is no very strong Argument with Protestants, who must either disclaim all such Authority by which they know they are condemned, or give up the Cause: I Answer secondly, that if *Segneri*, or any Catholick allow'd any Power to the Virgin *Mary* independently of *Jesus Christ*, or did even imagine that as much as *Christ* communicates to Her of his Power, so much he would lose of it himself; Then indeed the Objection would say something to the purpose, and Protestants would have Reason to reproach us with Blasphemy, for complimenting the Virgin so much, to the Prejudice of her Lord and Maker. But praise be to God, neither my Author, nor any other Catholick was ever so foolishly wicked, as to pretend any such Thing. And if Protestants will still urge, that tho' we do not say so much in plain Terms, yet it is a Necessary Consequence to what we do say: and that by allowing such exorbitant Power to the Virgin, we do effectually make Her Independent of *Christ*, and diminish his Power; I can only say that the proof of this Consequence remains still behind. And the bare Assertion of it, without something to prop it up, whatever effect it may have upon the Vulgar sort of ignorant People, to give them a horror of Catholick Principles, can never work any reasonable Conviction upon Men of Learning and Sense, who need only to open a Catholick Book, to see it as flatly denied, and the contrary solidly proved into the bargain.

If the Case were the same between God and his Creatures, as between Creature and Creature,

Creature, then the Consequence would have some plausible appearance. But the difference between the two Cases is infinitely too wide, to bear a legal Inference from one to the other. When we give a Thing to another, which is in our Power to give, we absolutely part with it, so that it is no more our own: And tho' the Person we gave it to, depended upon our Liberality, in the first act of Donation; yet, when this is once made, the Dominion is transferr'd to the Donée, or the Person that receives; who becomes thereby totally Independent of us, for the use and Disposition of the Thing given, and is as much Master of it from that time, as we were before. But in God this is altogether impossible: He can give without End, but can part with nothing, lose nothing, nor ever be the poorer for giving; And tho' he should communicate never so much of his Perfections, or of his Power to any of his Creatures, yet he can never part with his Essential Dominion over them; nor they consequently be exempt from their Essential Dependance on him, not only for the Exercise of any Power invested in them, but even for their very Being. And I believe there is not a Roman Catholick in the World, that does but understand these Terms, God, Creature, Dependance and Dominion, but what will be ready to sign with his Bloud, if need be, this undeniable Truth; that not only all the Men and Angels that ever were Created, but also the glorious Virgin *Mary* her self, as great as she is, or we can possibly conceive her to be, are so essentially and so eternally Dependent upon God, and his Divine pleasure, for all that they have and all that they are, that, setting aside his own free Decrees to the contrary, he could destroy them all the very next moment, if he pleased, with one

one *Pereant*, as he created them all with a *Fiat*. Nay I say more: That for this, no positive Act is required, but only a pure Cessation from that preserving Act by which he maintains them in their Being, and in the Possession of all that he has bountifully bestow'd upon them. So that, if such were the Divine Will, the whole Creation would return to its primitive Nothing, without any Act at all. An humbling Truth by the By, for proud Mortals, and the great ones of the Earth; who, whilst they are Idolized here below, as so many Demi-Gods, little reflect they have a God over their Heads, who can crush them to Nothing with all their Greatness and swelling Pride, in less than the turning of a Hand. If this is not Dependance, and the greatest that can be, we shall thank any one that can give us a better Notion of it. And if what he offers will save God's honour more, than what I have here explain'd, we shall most willingly subscribe to it. But till then *Segner's* Doctrine, nay I may say now, the Catholick Doctrine will stand its ground, and the Virgin remain in Possession of her Dignities, Titles, Prerogatives and Power, in spite of all her Enemies. And now, what becomes of all those dismal Clamours, and odious Names of Impiety, Superstition, Blasphemy and Idolatry, which ring in the Ears of the People from every Reformed Pulpit, to frighten them into an Aversion from the old Catholick Religion, when there is not the least appearance of any such thing, either in this Doctrine, or in any one Article of the Roman Catholick Faith.

I said above, that the Consequence charged upon Catholicks, of the Virgin's being made Independent, if such exorbitant Power were allow'd her, might seem plausible, if the Case were supposed to be the same between
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God and Man, as between Man and Man. Now I will shew that even in this Supposition, the Consequence would not at all be a Necessary one, as following from the Nature of the Thing, but meerly an Accidental one, and consequently of no force to prove what was intended. Kings and Sovereign Princes are said to be God's Representatives, and the liveliest Images of the Divinity we have upon Earth. These are invested with Power from above to Rule and Govern their People, *Non enim est potestas nisi à Deo.* Rom. 13. 1. *For there is no Power but from God.* This Power, this Authority, this Dominion, which makes up the Character and Essence, as I may say, of a Sovereign, is inalienable from them; for, as they receive it immediately from God, according to the Apostle, so no body but God can justly deprive them of it. *Itaque qui resistit potestati, Dei ordinationi resistit.* says the same Apostle, in the same place: *Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God.* And this, and nothing but this makes it Treason and Rebellion in Subjects, to attempt any thing against them. Now, it is certain that Earthly Princes, not having God's Immenstity, nor his Ubiquity, cannot be in all places at once, to exercise those Acts of Jurisdiction which are necessary for good government: And not having his Omniscience, they cannot be informed immediately by themselves, where their Authority may be wanted. Wherefore 'tis a Necessity in a Prince to communicate some part of his Authority to others, as his Ministers and Officers in their respective Employments, with whom he shares the Government: Yet so, that nothing but the Execution belongs properly to the Subject, whilst the Commanding part resides totally in the Prince, as in the Fountain of all Communicated Power; there being

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no Act of Jurisdiction Lawful or valid , but in the Sovereign's Name.

This being supposed , when a Prince communicates any of his Power to a Subject , or confers upon him Titles of Honour and Dignities , for his good Services , or , if you please , purely for Favour , is it proper to say that the Prince loses any of his Power himself , or has any one Degree of Honour and Majesty less in him than he had before , or infine that the Subject thereby becomes Independent ? I believe no man whether of Monarchical , or Republican Principles will venture to stand by this Assertion. For even in a Republick , whether Aristocratical , or Democratical , or of a mixt Composition , there is a Sovereign Power ; and it is but supposing this Power to reside in many , which in Monarchies is lodged in one , and the Argument is the same. I know indeed , and the World is too well informed by long and sad Experience , that Princes may be too Indulgent , or personally weak and unfurnished with Talents equal to the Dignity of a Sovereign , that Subjects may rebel , and Favourites may be insolent. Histories of all Ages and all Kingdoms are too full of instances of this nature , to make any doubt of it. Hence it may fall out that Princes , by too much Indulgence , or other personal defects , may come to lose great part of their Power themselves , by communicating too much of it to Rebels , Traitors , and Insolent Favourites , and sometimes even so far , that the Crown may fall from their Head , and they from the Throne. But this , any man that is not blind may see is not a necessary Consequence to the Nature of the Power so communicated ; but meerly an accidental one , arising from the Indulgence , or Weakness , or if you please , ill Fortune of the Prince on the one side , and from

from the Insolence, Ingratitude and Treachery of the Subject, on the other. Now, to imagine any such thing possible between God and his Favourites, the Saints, would be a greater Impiety and a more horrid Blasphemy, than that which is now in question, whether *Segneri* and the Catholicks can be justly taxed with, for allowing so much Power in Heaven to the Virgin *Mary*. God cannot part with his Power, and the Saints can never abuse it.

There are several Titles of Honour attributed to our Lady throughout all the Book, which Protestants will probably be much offended at, tho' certainly with very little Reason: in particular, this very Title it self of *Our Lady*, but chiefly that of *Queen of Heaven*. For, no less a man than Doctor *Tillotson*, an Eloquent Orator of this Age, and, (not to rob him of his equivocal Title, tho' he robs the Virgin of her undoubted ones) Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, passes a very rough Compliment upon Catholicks upon this Subject, in a Sermon he entitles, *God the Happiness of Man*, where he speaks thus. „ I have not yet instanced in the „ grossest part of their Superstition, not to say „ down right Idolatry in this kind. I mean „ their extravagant Worship of the Blessed „ Virgin and Mother of our Lord, whom they „ Blasphemously call the *Queen of Heaven*, and „ whom by a new Title unknown to the Scriptures and primitive Antiquity, they think to „ dignify with the modish Title of *Our Lady*, „ as if that could be any addition of Honour „ to her, whom the Angel declared to be blessed among Women. „ And for a certain Proof of the Novelty of all this, he assures us that it began 1400 years ago. For, in his *Seasonable new-years-gift against Popery*. he says, „ that this Practice began to creep in among „ some superstitious People, about the middle

„ of the fourth Century : and he remembers
 „ very particularly , that *Epiphanius* who lived
 „ about that time calls it the *Heresy of the Wo-*
 „ *man.* „ Here is gross Superstition , an In-
 „ riuendo of Idolatry , Extravagant Worship,
 Blasphemy , a mixture of Folly and Novelty in
 giving such modish Titles to the Virgin , and
 for the Close of the Compliment , down right
 Heresy , liberally charged upon all Catholicks
 for near 1400. years , from *Epiphanius* his time
 down to this , without any discontinuation. The
 longest Heresy that ever was , if it be one , or
 probably ever will be.

To all this, I might content my self with
 saying , that as the Dr. has been very liberal
 of his Assertions , or rather Aspersions , so he
 has been very sparing of his Proofs. But to
 leave nothing unanswered , I shall take the li-
 berty to help his Memory about the *Heresy of*
the Woman , which failed him a little on this
 occasion ; for he should have said, of the *Wo-*
men ; For so *Epiphanius* has it. *Hi enim qui hoc*
docent , qui sunt praterquam Mulieres ? Who are
they that teach this Doctrine , but the Women ? But
 I fear there was more of a Seasonable Meaning
 than want of Memory , in letting this small
 fault of impression pass uncorrected : it being
 not improbable that his Intention was , that
 his Auditory and Readers should believe that
 the whole stels of the Heresy consisted in
 that *Woman's* Worship of any kind , being the
 Object of it ; whereas *Epiphanius* says no such
 thing. He says , indeed, the *Collyridians* were He-
 reticks ; But why ? For worshipping the Vir-
 gin ? No ; for he himself did so : But for
 worshipping her , *Ultra Decorum* , Beyond De-
 cency , and more than was fitting ; that is,
 by honouring her as a Goddess , and playing
 the Priestesses by offering unto her a Cake, by
 way of Sacrifice. This is what *Epiphanius* says.

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And this all Catholicks condemn with *Epiphanius*, and *Segneri* himself expressly takes notice of it, in the IV. Paragraph of the IV. Ch. Part I. page 171. But this the Doctor did not remember, because he was giving a *Seasonable New-years-gift* to his Auditory against Popery; and tho' it had been very reasonable, yet he did not think it so very Seasonable to let them so far into the Truth of the Matter, lest it might prove, contrary to his Design, a New-years-gift for Popery. And whoever reads *Epiphanius* upon this 79th Heresy, will find it to be so. For, where he condemns the *Collyridians* for their Superstition, Idolatry and Folly, he manifestly confirms the Catholick Doctrine and Practice of Worshipping the Virgin within those Bounds of *Decorum*, which the Church has prescribed. For in three different places of that same Head, he expressly says, in the first, *Sit in honore Maria, Pater & filius, & spiritus Sanctus adoretur*. Let Mary be honoured, but let the Father, and the Son, and the H. Ghost be adored. In the second, *Maria in honore sit, Dominus adoretur*. Let Mary be honoured, but let the Lord be adored. In the third, *Est Maria Sancta, est & honorata, sed non ad Adorationem*. Mary is holy, and Mary is honoured, but not to Adoration. Is not here Honour and Worship allow'd by *Epiphanius*, not only as due, but also as actually pay'd to the Virgin, by the Church in his Time. *Est & honorata*, in as plain Terms as it is by any modern Catholick, provided it does not go to Adoration? But what must we think in the mean time, of this little Legerdemain of the Doctor's, in passing over in silence the only point of the Controversy, when he had such a fair Occasion of speaking the Truth? I can only say, that being an Eloquent Orator, he knew when 'twas time to make use of the Figure called *Reticentia*, that

is, a seasonable saying nothing of a Thing which might be dangerous to speak of, lest the Truth should be known. A Figure, which next to *Pseudologia*, has done the greatest service to the Reformation of any, either in Pulpit or Press.

But since the Dr. has obliged me to look into *Epiphanius*, I am willing to rub up his Memory once more, and to tell him that either he never read *Epiphanius*, or must have forgot that he is guilty of the same Blasphemy, which he taxes Catholicks with, for calling the Virgin *Queen of Heaven*. For, *Epiphanius* having severely chid those foolish Women, for their Superstitious Worship of the Virgin, says, *Nec dicant se honorare Reginam Cæli*. Let them not tell me for their Excuse, that they only honour the *Queen of Heaven*. Any wise man may see that *Epiphanius* could not look upon that as an Excuse, if there were not some honouring the *Queen of Heaven*, then in use in the Church, and which did not go to Adoration, which he knew to be lawful; and consequently that he did not find fault with them for honouring the *Queen of Heaven*, but for Adoring her, as a Goddess. And any one but a blind man may see that the *Queen of Heaven*, was a Title given to the Virgin, and commonly used in those early Days of the Church, and consequently not unknown to primitive Antiquity.

As for the Title of *Our Lady*, which Catholicks apply to the Virgin, and the Dr. scoffs at as Modish, I can only say 'tis the best English either He, or we can give for the Latin *Domina nostra*, as *Our Lord* is the best English for *Dominus noster*, which I hope he will not scoff at, as modish when applied to *Jesus Christ*. How modish however the Title of *Lady* is in England, and of how long standing among
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our Women of Quality, I leave him to define. 'Tis enough for me, if I can shew out of the primitive Fathers, that the Latin and Greek of it belong to the Virgin in the strictest propriety of their signification, and that this Title, whatever Language it is expressed in, is as ancient as her very Name of *Mary*. Saint *John Damascen* [l. 4. c. 15, de fide Orthodoxâ,] has these words, *Itaque Gratia (nam hoc sonat Anna vocabulum) Dominam parit (id enim Maria nomine significatur) Verè etenim verum omnium Domina facta est, cum Creatoris Mater exstitit.* Which runs thus in English. And thus *Grace* (for that is meant by the word *Ann*) brings forth our *Lady*, (for that is signified by the name of *Mary*) For, she was truly made the sovereign *Lady* of all things, when she became the Mother of the Creator. Saint *Peter Chrysologus* in his 142. Sermon upon the Annunciation speaks thus: *Dignitas Virginis annuntiatur ex Nomine: Nam Maria hebrae Sermo Latine Domina nuncupatur.* that is, The Dignity of the Virgin is announced in her very Name, for, *Mary* in Hebrew is called *Domina* in Latin; and I hope I may add without a Crime, *Lady* in English. Here there is no room for a Controversy: 'Tis enough to understand a little Hebrew to decide this point: And I may reasonably suppose that these two Fathers knew that Language to the full as well as Dr. *Tillotson*; To say nothing of Saint *Augustin*, who was before them, and who in his 2d Homily upon the Assumption, expressly calls the Virgin *Reginam Caelorum*, and *Dominam Angelorum*, the two very Titles the Doctor's tender Conscience cannot digest, as favouring of Blasphemy.

But, why so much difficulty in allowing the Title of *Lady* to the Virgin *Mary*? Was not she of Royal Blood, tho' her temporal fortune was not proportionable to her Quality? If this

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be disputed her. I should be curious to know which way the Doctor, or any Protestant will bring our Saviour down from the Royal Bloud of David; since 'tis well known that he had no other Parent according to the Flesh, but the Virgin Mary. Saint *Ambrose* [l. 2. de *Virginibus*,] was not so Scrupulous. He confidently asks the Question, *Quid nobilius Dei Matre?* What can be more Noble than the Mother of God? If I were to answer in the sentiments of Dr. *Tillotson*, I might say any Lady in the Land, even a Bishop's Lady without any Rank, as forgot in the old Ceremonial of England, is Nobler than the Virgin, if she may not be called a Lady, not even by Courtesy. It is true, the Virgin calls her self the Hand-maid of our Lord. If she does this out of Humility, is it therefore less a Duty in us to call her *Our Lady*, whom the Angel declared not only Blessed among Women, but also, as we have already demonstrated, the Sovereign Lady of all Things? Hear Saint *Ambrose* again [l. 2. in *Lucam*] *Vide Humilitatem. Ancillam se dicit Domini, qua Mater eligitur, nec repentino exaltata promisso est.* Behold her Humility. She styles her self the Hand-maid of the Lord, who is chosen to be his Mother, nor does she exalt her self upon so surprising a Promise. This would be no Humility in her, if she had not a Right to a better Title; tho' it was truly Humility in not assuming it to her self, whilst she lived upon Earth. But now the Days of her Humility are over, and according to the Promise of exalting those that humble themselves, she is gloriously Reigning in Heaven, *Exaltata super Choros Angelorum*, exalted above all the Quires of Angels, or, as Saint *Bernard* says, *super omnem Creaturam*, above all Creatures. Wherefore, 'tis but Justice and Duty in us, to call her what she truly is, our sovereign Lady.

Lady, and Queen of Heaven, and no Presumption in her, to accept of these Titles. However we do not pretend that these Appellations add any Honour to her intrinsically: We only say that they suppose all that to be in her, for which we pay her those extrinsecal Demonstrations of Honour: They being nothing else but outward Expressions, whereby we signify the great Respect and Esteem we have for Her, above all that is not God, and *Jesus Christ* himself. But if, by the By, I should ask the Doctor and Arch-bishop, if the modish Title of *My Lord*, was any Addition of Honour to him, whom the Sovereign had declared Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, and Primate of England, I fancy he would not be willing to deny it, for fear of a Demonstration which Catholics have in their Pocket against Protestant Ordination, tho' 'twas certainly in the Sovereign's Power to make him a Lord. And thus much for Titles.

Another thing which perchance may be objected against this little Book in general, is, that *Segneri* seems to take too much Liberty with Scripture, in applying several Texts to the Virgin, which seem to have no Relation at all to her: And very probably the inspired Writers never thought of the Virgin in most of those places, where he makes them speak in her favour. Besides, some Texts seem to be brought in purely to serve a turn of carrying on, or bringing off, an ingenious Thought of the Author's. This I think ought not in Modesty to be made an Objection to *Segneri*, by those who not only take the Liberty to turn the Scripture which way they please, like a Nose of wax, and will rather give a Hundred different Interpretations to a plain Text, all out of the way, than agree with the Church in the true one; but also frequently make bold with

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the Text it self, by chopping and changing, putting in and putting out, what will not bend to their Erroneous Opinions. And tho' sometimes the Words thus changed seem to be insignificant, and scarce altered with Design, yet the subtile Correctors of the Bible were sensible, that if they were left standing, as they received them from their Fore-fathers the Roman Catholicks, they had been sufficient to beat down a whole File of Reformed Articles. But what Wonder? They were upon the Reform, and the Scripture wanted it, they thought, as well as Church and State. But to answer the Objection: The Question here is not whether the Virgin be literally meant in those places of Scripture which *Segneri* applies to her, or not; nor whether the inspired Writers had any expresse Thoughts of her, or no, when they writ their Prophecies of her: But, as I take it, the Question ought to be, whether *Segneri* had no Reason to apply those Texts to her, and whether the use he has made of Scripture, on those occasions, be lawful or not: I scarce think such an Exception will be made by any one that knows that the sacred Obscurity of Holy Writ in many places, makes it capable of very various Interpretations, besides the literal one, all probable and congruous, without the least contradiction between them. This has been the Labour and Study of the learned Interpreters of all Ages, to find out the most probable Meaning of what is most obscure in Scripture, and very often without being able to determine which of all the senses it is applicable to, is that which the H. Ghost chiefly intended. And here, by the By, I think no body need to go any further for an Argument of the Necessity of a living Infallible Judge of the true sense of Scripture. Now, as long as an Author, whether in Dogmatical,

Moral,

Moral, or Panegyrical Discourses, gives no other Construction to the Texts he applies to his Subject, than what is supported with Congruities and probable Reasons, authorised by the best Interpreters, and not contradicted by any other Scripture, nor by the Church's Interpretation, this cannot be called an abuse of Scripture, but rather a handsom and commendable managing of it, and not only lawful, but very useful also both for Instruction and Edification, nay even for Ornament too to such Discourses; provided it be done with due Respect, and without Prejudice to Faith and good Manners. I do not believe the Reader will find any Text in all this Book, in which *Signeri* has not Religiously observed all these Circumstances: and consequently he cannot justly be taxed with any abuse of Scripture; Especially if it be further considered, that he is not commenting or Glossing upon Scripture, as a Professed Interpreter, but rather like a Preacher writing an Instructive Panegyrical Discourse. Besides, there is scarce any of those Texts which *Signeri* has made use of, but what the Church it self, and the H. Fathers have expressly applied to the Virgin. To instance only in one, Saint *Augustin*, [*de symbolo ad Catechumenos*,] speaking of the Dragon, in the Apocalypse, standing before the Woman in labour, ready to devour her Child, and which *Signeri* only gives a hint at. pag. 264, says, *Draconem Diabolum esse, Mulierem illam, Virginem Mariam significasse nemo vestrum ignorat*. That the Dragon is the Devil, and that that Woman signifies the Virgin *Mary*, none of you are ignorant. Yet the Protestant Commentary upon the Bible is very ignorant of what was known by all, in Saint *Augustin*'s time. They apply it all to the Church, but not a word of *Mary*. Saint *Augustin* indeed applies it to the Church too: but
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first to *Mary*, and then he says that *Mary* herself was a figure of the Church. But this was too honourable a Commemoration of *Mary*, in so great a Man as St. *Augustin* was, for Reformers to take notice of. And thus I think I have run through all the chief points of the first Part of this Book, which may give any occasion of Censure, even to the severest Critick.

As for all the second Part of the Book, there being nothing in it, but Instructions to Piety, a few Prayers to the Virgin, and some other particular Exercises of Devotion towards Her, I shall say nothing to it: since there can be nothing Objected to those Things, but the common Clamours of Superstition and Bigotry: Which if we must have patience to hear, at least from the Vulgar, we shall be wise enough also, I hope, to condemn; and not alter our Prayers upon that Account, tho' the above mentioned Doctor charitably tells us we ought to do it: Especially, says he, when they know they are charged with Idolatry upon this Account; and since to clear themselves of it, they will not alter their Prayers, they justly ly under the suspicion of it. We know that we are charged with Idolatry, Superstition and Blasphemy, and the Doctor has taken such care to let us know it, that we cannot plead Ignorance. But charging is nothing. Proving is all. And therefore we shall beg leave to wait for some better Proofs of all these heavy Charges, than have been offered hitherto, either by the Doctor, or any of his Coat, since the Reformation began, before we think of altering our Prayers, or indeed any one point of the Catholick Doctrine or Practice. The Eagle is not to be taught to look at the Sun, by Birds that fly by Night, nor the Church instructed in her Duty, by those, *Qui ambulat in tenebris*, who walking in the Dark, lose themselves and their

their followers in the Obscurity of their Errors.

Now, Dear Reader, a word or two for what I promised in the beginning, about Praying to Saints in general: Tho', for this, as not regarding the Virgin in particular more than any other Saint, I might refer my Reader to those Controversies which treat of this matter in particular, for an Answer; Yet, because he may perchance never have an Occasion to look into those Books, and that his Prejudice against this Catholick Tenet may not be an Obstacle to the Benefit he might receive by Reading of this, I am willing to say something to this Point, to let him see that Catholics have more Reason on their side than he imagines. And as it is in this, so if he would take the pains, he would find, upon Inquiry, that it is the same in all the other Points controverted between us.

All that the Catholics hold to be of Faith in this matter, as it is declared in the Council of Trent, [*Sess. 25. de Invoc.*] comes to no more than this, *That the Saints who Reign with Jesus Christ, offer up their Prayers to God for men: And that it is good and profitable to ask their Prayers for obtaining Blessings of God, through Jesus Christ his Son, our Lord, who alone is our Saviour and Redeemer.* In the first part of this Doctrine the Protestants easily agree with us, for they have no difficulty to allow that the Angels and Saints in Heaven do pray for us, at least in general, if not also in particular for their friends and Relations. But they differ from us in the other part; and are so far from thinking it good and profitable to desire them to pray for us, that they are persuaded it is injurious to Christ, and his Mediatorship. For, by praying to Saints, or desiring them to pray to God for us, which with us is the same thing, we make

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the Saints, they say, Mediators between God and us: Whereas Saint Paul expressly tells us *There is but One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Jesus Christ.*

Here, I confess, I am at a stand to conceive how any Protestant can reconcile these two things together: Their allowing the Saints to pray for us, without any Injury to *Christ's* Mediatorship, with their finding fault with us, for desiring the Saints to pray for us, upon that very Account of its being injurious to *Christ*, and his Mediatorship. Is not this to build with one hand, and pull down with the other? Why must it be injurious to *Christ's* Mediatorship, for the Saints to pray for us, when *Desired*, and not injurious to the same Mediatorship, if they pray for us, when *not Desired*? A plain Answer to this would be very satisfactory. For certainly if the Mediatorship of *Christ* be any thing concerned in this Case, it must be in the Saints praying for us, interceding for us, helping us by the Mediation of their Prayers, in a word, Mediating between God and us: for, all these Terms are Synonymous. And our desiring them so to do, or their doing it of their own accord, without being desired, is meerly extrinsecal to the Mediatorship it self. And yet, this is the most Substantial Objection that Protestants ever made against this Article.

But the Truth of the matter is, there is no such thing as any Mediatorship allowed by Catholicks to Saints and Angels, or even the Virgin her self, in the proper rigorous sense of Mediatorship, as it is meant by the Apostle, and peculiarly proper to *Christ*, but only a Mediatorship of a very inferiour Rank. The Mediatorship of *Christ* is a Mediatorship of Justice, founded upon a Right which he has purchased with his Eternal Father, of demanding, and

and of obtaining whatever he is pleased to demand; as having laid down the just price of it all, in his Death and Passion, and satisfied the Divine Justice more than in full, for all the Debt we had contracted, or can possibly contract. Whereas the Mediatorship of the Saints, is of pure favour, founded in the Goodness of God, who is pleased to accept of their Prayers in our behalf; and in the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, without which we do not allow them to have any force at all. And therefore when we put up our Prayers to Saints, or rather, when we address our Prayers to God, through the Intercession of the Saints, we not only begin them with, *Deus qui*: or, *Omnipotens sempiternus Deus*, or, *Præsta quæsumus Omnipotens Deus &c.* but we always conclude them with, *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum*: through our Lord *Jesus Christ*. In a word, when *Christ* demands the Salvation of any one, he challenges it as a Right; when the Saints demand it, they beg it as a favour.

This Notion of Mediatorship I find to be not only acknowledged by Protestants, but even made use of by the most learned among them, to answer us when we press them, to know why the Saints are not Mediators, when they pray for us of their own accord and must be Mediators, when we desire them to pray for us. To go no further, the Eloquent Dr. *Tillotson* so often mentioned above, in another of his Sermons printed in Volumes after his Death, [Vol. II. pag. 93.] says, *They are not Mediators and Intercessors properly so called: for all Intercession strictly and properly so called, is in Virtue of a Sacrifice offer'd by him that intercedes.* Here, Dear Protestant Reader, you see by your own Divines of the first Class, that tho' we should desire the Saints to pray for us never so much, and they being thus de-

fired should pray never so much, yet They can never be Mediators, or Intercessors so properly called, since they never offered up any Sacrifice, in Virtue of which they could merit that Denomination. And consequently that heavy Charge of Impiety, and of derogating from *Christ's* Mediatorship, laid upon Catholicks, for calling upon the Saints for their Prayers, vanishes into another empty Dispute about Words and Phrases. Wherefore, we most willingly subscribe to what this learned Man says, that the Saints cannot be Mediators nor Intercessors properly so called, and in Virtue of a Sacrifice, and shall beg leave to borrow of him this plain Assertion for our Justification, together with our hearty Thanks to him, for stumbling so luckily upon the Truth in our favour: since he could not have alledged a Thing more to our purpose, if he had been hired to write our Apology.

Here the question may be ask'd, what Necessity of praying to Saints, since their Intercession is so improperly what it is called, and at the same time so entirely depending upon the Merits of *Christ*, that without them it can avail us Nothing? Is it not better to go directly to the Fountain it self, *Jesus Christ*, and let the Saints alone to enjoy their Happiness, without troubling them with our Concerns, and importuning them for every little thing we want? If you speak of an absolute Necessity, or an indispensable obligation imposed upon all the Faithful, I answer there is none at all. But then, I hope you'll allow me what is but reasonable, that a great many things may be good and Profitable, which are not absolutely Necessary. The Church indeed recommends it to all, as good and profitable, and as Mistress of Discipline, has thought fit to lay a particular Duty upon the Clergy, of the Bre-
viary

viary and Mass, in which there are several Offices and Prayers to Saints, and the Blessed Virgin. But these are obligations annexed to their State of Life, not to the Religion they Profess: And as for troubling the Saints, and disturbing them in the enjoyment of their Happiness, this is a Rallery better answer'd with Contempt than with any serious Argument.

There is indeed another Objection against Praying to Saints, viz. that they cannot hear our Prayers, at so great a distance. If the Reasons that are brought for this Objection had any force, viz. the Saints not acting by the use of Senses, because they have none to act by: I believe they would prove every jot as well, that they could not hear us, tho' they were at our Elbows. So that, the distance of place has nothing to do in this Case, but to throw Dust in the Eyes of the People. But this I take for a plausible Objection, calculated for the dull Imagination of the Ignorant, who know of no other way of Communication of Thoughts and Desires, but by the help of our gross material Senses, Eyes, Ears, and Tongue. As for the Learned, 'tis hard to believe they are serious, when they bring this as an Obstacle to Praying to Saints. For, if they know any thing, they should know that Spirits, and spiritual Substances, such as all separated Souls are, who have no other Acts but spiritual ones, and independent from all that is Corporeal, must have some other way of Communicating with one another, than by the help of the Senses; unless they mean to deprive the Saints of a great part of their accidental Happiness, which consists in rejoycing with one another. Now, as they certainly understand one another without the help of Senses, tho', as Saint *Augustin* says, the manner how this is performed is incomprehensible to us, I do not see why

they should not as easily Understand us : for this is all we mean by their hearing our Prayers : and we are not disputing about the manner how they hear them , but whether they hear them, or no.

But, to shew how little Reason and good Sense there is, in this Objection, I ask : Is it lawful to pray to Saints ? No, says the Protestant, because it is injurious to *Christ*, and his Mediatorship. Here is good Sense, but no Truth. But if he should say, No, 'tis not lawful to pray to Saints, because they cannot hear. Where is the Sense of this Answer, tho' there were never so much Truth in the Reason given? If praying to Saints be injurious to *Christ*, then what matter is it, whether the Saints hear us or not? Their hearing our Prayers will never make it more lawful to pray to them, as long as praying is Injurious to *Christ*. And if it be no matter whether they hear us or no, why is their not hearing made an Objection against the Lawfulness of Praying ? But the Truth is, the soberer Protestants do not bring this as an Argument for the unlawfulness of it, but for the Folly of it. That is; They found it a hard Task, to make out their charge of Impiety, and Superstition upon the Catholics for Praying to Saints, upon the account of any Injury done to *Christ*, because they were sensible they had the same difficulty to answer themselves, when they allow that Saints do actually pray for us. Therefore, some other popular Argument was to be found, that if they could not justly accuse us of Impiety, without bringing themselves in equally guilty, they might at least plausibly Indite us for Ignorance and Folly, at the grand Tribunal of the illiterate Mob : for Ignorance, in thinking that the Saints can hear our Prayers : and for Folly, in Praying to them as heartily as if they could hear us, as well as we

we hear one another. And, tho' they saw this would not go down so easily with men of Learning and good sense, yet they thought it would be of no very hard Digestion for common Stomachs: And so it has proved. For you shall scarce name the word of Praying to Saints, to a Protestant of the vulgar sort, but he will smile and ask you seriously; how is it possible to hear, at so many Millions of Miles distance? The short answer to this, is, That they do not hear us, as we hear one another, by the Help of Ears and Sounds: But they understand us, and know our Meaning, even tho' we should not express it by Words, but only speak with the Heart; as is manifest out of Saint *Augustin* [lib. de Cur pro Mort. c. 26.] who moves the same difficulty, and confesses his Judgment cannot reach to understand how the Saints relieve those who call upon them, and yet owns at the same time that They do certainly assist them, and do intercede for such as call upon them; Nay, Scripture it self plainly tells us, that there is Joy in Heaven, at the Conversion of a Sinner; by which it is evident that Saints and Angels do know what passes upon Earth; and since it is neither by hearing nor seeing, it is plain it must be by some other way unknown to us. Now, whether this be by a special Revelation made to the Saints by God himself, or by some other way connatural to their Being of Intelligent Substances, is very indifferent to the question, as long as the Matter of Fact is certain, that they do Understand us. And this any one may see was the Universal Persuasion of all Christendom, till the Days of the unhappy Reformation, that will but take the pains to consult Antiquity, and read the Holy Fathers. *Interroga Patres tuos, & dicent tibi.* Ask your Forefathers, and they'll tell you, by their own

own Practice, that it is good and profitable to pray to the Saints, especially the Virgin Mary. Ask St. James the Apostle, and he'll tell you in his Liturgy, acknowledged and praised in the 6th General Council, under *Justinian* the Emperour, how he made a solemn Commemoration of the Bd. Virgin, in these terms, *Commemorationem agamus Sanctissima, Immaculata, gloriosissima, Benedicta Domina nostra Matris Dei, & semper Virginis Maria.* Ask the Syrians, the first Disciples of the Apostles, and they'll tell you in their *Sacrum Sacrorum*, which we call the *Mass*, how, after the Angelical Salutation, they called upon the Virgin, much in the same form as we do now. *Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis, inquam peccatoribus. Amen.* Ask St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, and all the Composers of Liturgies, either Latin or Greek, and they'll tell you, that the Virgin's name comes in almost at every other word. St. Ambrose particularly [*Precatione 2. ad Missa Prapar*] has these words, *Et ut efficax hac mea sit deprecatio, Beata Maria Virginis suffragia peto &c.* Finally, not to tire my Reader with any more citations, I will conclude this whole Apology, with these notable Words of St. *Augustin*, which are as formal a Prayer to the Virgin, as any now adays used among the Roman Catholicks, nay, the later part of it is actually borrow'd from him by the Church. In his 18th. Sermon of the Saints, addressing himself to the Virgin, Queen of them all, he speaks thus: *Admitte nostras preces intra Sacrarium Exauditionis, & reporta nobis Antidotum Reconciliationis. Accipe quod offerimus, redona nobis quod rogamus, quia tu es spes Unica peccatorum; Per te speramus Delictorum veniam, & in te, Beatissima, nostrorum est expectatio pramiorum. Sancta Maria, succurre Miseris, juva pusillanimes, resove flebiles, Ora pro Populo,*

pulo, interveni pro Clero, intercede pro devoto famineo sexu, sentiant omnes tuum juvamen, quicunque celebrant tuam Sanctam festivitatem. Admit our Prayers within the Sanctuary of thy favourable Audience, and bring us back the Antidote of Reconciliation. Accept of what we offer, and restore us what we demand, because Thou art the only Hope of Sinners. By thee, we hope for the pardon of our Sins, and in thee, most Blessed, is the Expectation of all our Rewards; Holy *Mary* succour the Miserable, help the Pusillanimous, comfort the afflicted, Pray for the People, interpose for the Clergy, intercede for the Devout feminine Sex, let all feel thy Assistance, whoever celebrate thy holy Festival. Here is praying to the Virgin with a Witness, by the greatest, the learnedest, and perchance the holiest Doctor that ever was in the Church, and at the same time an absolute Answer to all the Aspersions, Cavils, and Calumnies that have ever been charged upon Catholicks upon this account, since the Reformation first began.

And thus, Dear Reader, having clear'd the way for thee, to read this little Book, *inoffenso pede*, as St. *Jerom* phrases it, without danger of stumbling, or striking thy foot against even the smallest Pibble stone of Scandal, it only remains that I wish thee all that spiritual good and Comfort in the perusal of it, which that Divine Spirit intended thou shouldst be partaker of, who inspired the Zealous and learned Author to write it and me to translate it: Both, I hope, for his own greater Honour and Glory, and that of his Blessed Mother, the ever glorious, and Immaculate Virgin *MARY*.

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THE
DEVOUT CLIENT
OF
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Anno Domini
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Anno Domini



THE INTRODUCTION

Wherein is shewn

*The difference between the true Devotion
to our B. Lady, and a false one, with
which Sinners frequently deceive
themselves.*

§. I.

THe more a Coin is pre-
tious, the more it is com-
monly in danger of being
counterfeited. And there-
fore 'tis no wonder that the De-
vil, who, as the Father of Lies
and Deceit, is the grand Ring-lea-
der of all such false Coiners, has
ever been, and still is so industri-
ous to counterfeit the Devotion
towards the B. Virgin; which is that
pretious Gold, so acceptable to the
A Divine

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Divine Mercy, and so current in the Bank of Heaven : Wherefore, Christian Reader, it will be a matter of no small importance to you, to procure a faithful Touch-stone, whereby you may try, and discover the sincerity of this noble Metal ; to the end that, at the great Accounting Day, you may not be like unto those negligent and unwary Bankers, who, at the closing of their Accounts, find themselves basely Bankrupt, when they thought themselves to have good Credit, and the Ballance to be in their favour. And I heartily wish you would set upon this Enterprize, with as much zeal and Resolution, as I am here willingly disposed, and desirous to direct you in it, by the help of this little Book ; Till at length you come, by the shortest and easiest way, to find out this pretious Touch-stone ; which you may justly value as the choicest of Jewels, if you know how to make a right use of it, for your own advantage.

What is therefore this Devotion to the B. Virgin ? It is natural enough for every one, to frame un-

The Introduction.

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to himself an Imagination of things, not as they truly are in themselves, but as he himself would have them to be. The *Abyssins*, a known People in *Ethiopia*, if they are to represent an Angel in a Picture, they paint him with a black face, because their own is black; so Sinners, because their Heart is blacken'd with the filth of Sin, conceive a most hideous black Idea of this Devotion to our B. Lady; which yet they magnify beyond measure, and extol above all other Devotions; as if, for example, a Murderer, an Adulterer, or a Soul stained with the loathsome spots of Sin, the very sight whereof is enough to move Her to Indignation, might pretend to pass for a Devout Client of our Lady. Wherefore, as we cannot judge whether the Waters of a Rivulet be good, and wholesom, unless we taste them at the Fountain-head; so we cannot frame a right Idea of this Devotion in particular, which I am now to treat of, unless we understand what Devotion is in general.

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§. II.

DEvotion in general, according to Saint Thomas, is that readiness of the Will, with which a man is carried towards every thing that belongs to the service of God: *Voluntas quadam promptè tradendi se ad ea, quæ pertinent ad Dei famulatum.* * So that, as He may be truly said to be devout, or devoted to his Prince, who is ready to undertake any thing for the glory and interest of his Prince: Devoted to his Country, who is ready upon all occasions to serve his Country; so, in respect of Almighty God, the Children of *Israel* were truly called devout, or devoted to his service, when being to Erect unto Him that so celebrated Tabernacle in the Desert, they all came in, with incredible Alacrity and chearfulness, to bring the most pretious things they had, for that purpose: Their plate of silver and gold, their Necklaces of Pearl, their Jewels, and all their richest Ornaments. † According to his Rule,

* S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 82, art 1.

† 2. Exod. 35.

or Standard , what must be the true Devotion to our B.Lady? It must be a readiness of the Will , to undertake and put in execution whatsoever may be pleasing to her , or conducing to her honour. And therefore rigorous Fasts, long Prayers , and longer Pilgrimages performed in her honour , are not properly to be called Devotion to the great Virgin Mother of God: But they are either the Effects of it, if they proceed from this readiness of the Will to serve Her , or a Means towards it, if, at least, they conduce in some manner to the procuring of it. As long as they are neither such Effects, nor such Means , they are only a Mask of Devotion : Because they neither suppose this Readiness of the Will, nor give it. And consequently are not that true Coin we speak of, and which finds Credit wherever it is known. It is a sort of Metal , which imitates the true , inasmuch as it bears the same stamp , but falls far short of the real value of it; and, as such , instead of being laid up in the Treasury of Heaven , will be thrown out upon the Dung-hill. *Aurum illo-*

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rum in sterquilinum erit. Ezech. 7. 19.

This being supposed, how can those be looked upon as devout Clients of the B. Virgin, who in so many occasions are Refractory to what She requires of them; and contenting themselves with some slender exterior Profession of worship towards Her, refuse her at the same time, the very thing She most of all desires, to wit, the Abandoning of their sins? Have these a Readiness of the Will to serve Her? Do these endeavour to please Her, or seek her glory? On the contrary, all they seem to aim at, if well considered, is only to deceive Her. The *Gabbaonites*, to subtract themselves from that sentence, which was executing with great rigour, upon the Inhabitants of the Land of Promise, deceived *Iosue*, by appearing before Him, with their Clothes all in rags, their Victuals dried up, their Pitchers empty, and their Shoos worn out; as if they had made a long Journey to find him out, when they had scarce stirred from home, to look for him. Just so do these Sinners, and pretended Clients of the Virgin.

Virgin. They have no other design, than to stave off that dreadful sentence of Condemnation, which the divine Justice is continually threatening them withall, and from time to time even executes upon their fellow Sinners. And for this reason, full of Respect, they present themselves before the B. Virgin, with I know not what of an austere habit of Penance, more apparent than real; that is to say, with certain exterior Acts, tho' pious in themselves, of an Alms, for example, sparingly given for her sake, a few Psalms recited, or a Fast upon a Saturday in her honour; And by this they mean to persuade her, they have made long Journies to find her out; Whereas they have made but very few steps towards Her; and perchance have not set foot out of doors, by quitting their inveterate Habits of Sin, in which they have passed the best part of their lives. But they deceive themselves, if they think they can deceive *Mary*, as the *Gabbaonites* deceived *Iosue*. For if He was then imposed upon, and cheated into a league of Friendship with

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with them, because he *did not consult with the mouth of the Lord*; *Os Domini non interrogavit*; Jos. 9. 14. There can be no danger of any such surprise in the Virgin, who seeing all things in God, sees the deceitful heart of those false Clients. And thus it appears plain, that where there is not a Will, and a ready Will, to please the Virgin *Mary*, there can be no true Devotion to Her.

§. III.

BUt, that by this Rule we may not altogether deprive either Sinners of that Confidence, which they have placed in the B. Virgin, or the Virgin of that worship which She receives from Sinners; we will, if you please, distinguish in this manner. Some are Sinners, and are still resolved to continue Sinners; adding to their sinful wounds, the more sinful Obstinacy of slighting the Cure of them. Others are Sinners indeed, but yet would willingly become Just; And therefore sigh after some pious Samaritan, to pour the healing Balsam into their wounds,

wounds, of which they now begin to feel the smart. This second sort of Sinners may be of good Heart; For, tho' they are not yet arrived to the true Devotion to our Lady, as not being in that ready disposition of Will, absolutely to quit their sinful state for Her sake, yet they are in a way towards it; because they have some desire, at least, of quitting it, tho' at present, but a very weak one. Those early Rays of Light which the Sun sends before him, from under the Horizon, are only the break of Day, not Day itself; Give the Sun time to rise above the Horizon, and 'twill not be long before the bright Day will appear in it's full glory. Let those poor Sinners, as miserable as they are, continue to recommend themselves to the great Mother of God, and earnestly beg of Her every day, to break those heavy chains of slavery they are still groaning under; *Solve vincla reis*: And after such an *Aurora*, it cannot be doubted, but the Sun of Justice, of which she is the Fore-runner, will rise one day in their Souls. This is properly the Office of

of

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Of the B. Virgin, to lead Sinners to God. *Mater mea dulcissima esca est, quæ ad me peccatores traho.* * My Mother, said our Saviour to his beloved S. Catherine of Siena, is a delicious Bait, with which I draw Sinners unto me. But that other sort of obdurate Sinners, who will not so much as admit of a thought of surrendring their Hearts to Repentance: *Non dant cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Dominum.* Ose. 5. 4. Shall they, do you think, be reckon'd amongst the devout Clients of our Lady? They neither are of that happy Number, nor ever like to be: But on the contrary, they are so far from being Her true Clients, and faithful servants, that they cannot be more professedly her Enemies, than they are. They pretend, indeed, to honour her; But what is their design in it? To continue as long as it shall be in their power, to offend her divine Son, and then to hope for Mercy by her means. What Treachery can be imagined greater than this, or what Folly more Extravagant? *Servate mihi puerum meum Ab-*
salom.

* S. Cath. Sen. Dial. C. 4.

Salom. Spare me my Son *Abfalom*, was the Order King *David* gave to those loyal Souldiers, who would not depart from their Allegiance to their lawful Sovereign, when all the rest revolted against Him. The same Charge, we may reasonably imagine, has been given by the B. Virgin, to all those, who have lifted themselves in her service, under her Royal Standard. *Servate mihi puerum meum Iesum.* Spare me my Son *Iesus*. Do not abuse him, O ye Faithful: do not affront him: But shew him that Respect, and Reverence which is due to Him, far beyond what was ever due to the Rebel *Abfalom*. Now, if notwithstanding all this, there should be found a rash *Joab*, who, having cruelly pierced the Heart of such an Innocent Son, should come directly to the Mother, with his three Lances reeking with the blood of the Son, not to cast them and himself at her feet, with grief and Confusion, nor to humble himself before Her, but to give them a sharper Edge under her very Eyes, and to prepare them for deeper wounds; shall such a Monster, I say,
as

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as this, be looked upon as a faithful Servant and devout Client of such a Mother? Yet this is the Case. Faith teaches us that Mortal Sin has once already been the Cause of the death of *Iesus*. And it would be so again, if the power of the Sinner were equal to his Boldness and Malice. For, as the learned *Cajetan* saith, *Malum Culpa, quantum ex se, est privativum boni Divini, si esset privabile: sicut Amor Amicitia erga Deum, est positivum boni Divini, si esset ponibile.* *Cajet. 1. p. q. 19. ar. 9.* The Evil, or guilt of Sin is of such a malignant Nature, that if God could lose any thing of his goodness, Sin would take it from him; just as, on the Contrary, the Love of Friendship towards God, is of it's own Nature, so inclined to do good, that, if God were capable of any new Perfection, this Love would bestow it upon him. How is it possible therefore, that any one with Sword, as I may say, in hand, that is, with a deliberate Resolution to offend *Iesus Christ*, daily more and more, shall presume to boast of his Fidelity, and Devotion to his B. Mother? Nay, and in that quality

quality of a true Client of Hers, shall vainly confide in her protection, hope for preservation from her, and even (I might almost add) expect to be rewarded by her, for his insolence? No, no. This is not to honour the Virgin; But rather to offend her with greater impudence, and to pass a more sensible Affront upon Her. Let me ask these Sinners this question. Either you believe that the Virgin is not displeased at your sins: and thus, you make her as guilty of them as your self, *Abominabilem sicut ea qua dilexit.* Ose. 9. 10. Or, you truly believe they are displeasing to her: And if so, who can sufficiently express the Affront you put upon Her, when you flatter your self, that by your pretended Obsequiousness towards Her, you can prevail upon Her to authorize your Crimes? Do you think those services, or Duties, as you call them, can be acceptable to her, which are only intended by you to increase that very Evil of sin, which she so much abhors? I know, indeed, that *Christ* has placed the Virgin in this World, not only as a

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Bait, to draw unto himself the soft-
en'd Hearts of Flesh, that is, of
those Sinners, who begin to think
of an Amendment of Life, as has
been said above; But also, as a Load-
stone, to draw the Hearts of steel;
that is, of Sinners harden'd in their
sins, as was reveal'd to *S. Bridget*.
But, O the prodigious Malice and
perverseness of these wicked Sinners!
Not only they will not suffer them-
selves to be drawn by this Heavenly
Load-stone unto God, but on the con-
trary, they endeavour to pervert the
Order of divine grace, by drawing
the Load-stone to themselves: And
instead of yielding themselves up to
Her, as a Conquest she is the most
Ambitious of, they would, if pos-
sible, even oblige Her to stand by
them in their Wickedness, and second
their sacrilegious Designs. What can
be imagined more insolent than this,
or more injurious to Her honour?
Do you not know, says the Apostle,
That the goodness of God invites you to
Repentance? * The Husbandman would
never think it worth his while to take
pains

* *Ignoras quoniam benignitas Dei ad
pœnitentiam te adducit. Rom. 2. 4.*

pains about Fens, and Marshy grounds, were it not for some prospect he has of making good Land of them in time, and of rendring them fruitful, by draining off the Waters. In the same manner, the divine Mercy can never Love Sinners with any other design, than to drain off from their Hearts choked up, as I may say, with the Mud and Mire of sin, those filthy Waters of Iniquity, which they have drunk in so plentifully, and which have drown'd in them all sense of Piety and Devotion; unless it were for the hopes of disposing them by this means, to repay, with advantage, the losses of their former sterility, by bringing forth worthy fruits of Repentance, for what is past, and a greater Abundance of good Works, for the time to come. If Mercy towards Sinners did not propose unto it self some such good End, it would not be Mercy, but Insensibility and folly, nay, even Wickedness. This being so, it is a very probable Inference, that the Mother of God has not, upon Earth, any more insupportable Enemies, than those who make unto

16. *The Devout Client of MARY*,
themselves a Bucler of her favours,
in order to sin with greater confidence. Because these people seem to be resolved to snatch from Her, as it were, by force, the most beautiful Star she bears in her Crown, I mean, her title of *Mother of Mercy*, as she is daily stiled by the faithful. She'll be obliged, at length, to lay down that title of Tenderness and Compassion, when she finds her Mercies so far abused, contrary to her Intentions, as to increase the number of Sinners, instead of diminishing them. Rather, on the contrary, if She sees that those gentle drops of heavenly Dew, which She so liberally pours down upon all Mankind, have no better Effect, than to nourish those vile and Venimous Insects, she will be forced, both in honour and Justice, to change that Dew into Storms and Tempests: and, instead of the comfortable title of *Mother of Mercy*, to take upon Her the dreadful one of *Mother of Wrath*. She will be forced, I say, to declare open war against them, to pursue them with fire and sword, to put them to Confusion, to pass
sentence

sentence of Death upon them ; and
infinite , with her own sacred feet , to
crush the Head of that accursed
Progeny of Vipers ; Which, if they
were greedy to suck in the precious
Milk of her Almerciful Breasts , it
was only to heighten the infection
of their own Poison.

§. IV.

BUt , what must become then of
this sort of miserable Sinners?
Is there no Remedy for them ? Must
they leave off those few Prayers, and
Devotions they were wont to offer
up to Her ? Must they lay aside all
those Fasts , those Alms , those Pil-
grimages , and other pious practices,
and Exhibitions of honour and Re-
verence towards Her ? No. God for-
bid they should. Let them continue
them ; But then they must remember
to raise their intention to a nobler
End ; that their pious practices, and
Devotions may not be altogether
without Effect. Let them profess to
the great Mother of God , that they
have no other aim in their Devo-
tions to Her , than to move Her to
B 3 obtain,

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obtain for them of Almighty God,
strength and Resolution enough to
abandon their sins. And, if their Case
be so desperate, and the mortal
distemper of their Souls; by long
continuance, has so far gain'd upon
them, that now they ly, as it were,
Bed-ridden in the Corruption of their
Evil Habits, without even a Desire
of recovering their spiritual Health;
Let them beg of Her, this very De-
fire, which they want: And this
Desire will be a certain sign of their
approaching Health, or, to say bet-
ter, will be the beginning of it:
since it is a known Axiom, that, *Pars*
sanitatis est, velle sanari. To desire to
be cured, is almost half the Cure.



THE

THE FIRST PART.

*Of the Motives which may help us to
obtain the true Devotion towards
the B. Virgin.*

 Question not, Dear Reader, but by the Character I have hitherto given of some, who, tho' they pretend to be Devout Clients of our Lady, yet are far from being truly such, you will easily discern the true Devotion to the ever B. Virgin, from that which is but a meer shadow of it, without any Substance: And that you will not be so easily deluded by the outward, and superficial appearance of those false Colours, with which the Devil sometimes endeavours to disguise it. It remains now, that I propose unto you some of the principal, and most efficacious Motives, to incite you to the procuring of it; since the endeavouring to procure it, and the effectual obtaining it, are not many steps asunder.

If it be true, that Devotion always proceeds from Love, as from
it's

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it's immediate Cause ; if it be a Flame of that noble Fire , a Ray of that Sun , a Rivulet of that Fountain; it follows of course , that the same Motives which will induce us to Love the B. Virgin , will also have force enough to inkindle in our Hearts a sincere Devotion to Her; by stirring up in us a Readiness of the Will , to do whatsoever She shall require of us , either for her honour, or , for her service. Now , as every Object of our Love derives it's amability , or worthiness to be beloved, principally from these two Heads: Either , because it is good in it self, or, because it is good with reference to Us ; so likewise in every Love, we may consider two sorts of Perfections which it is capable of: The One substantial ; which is called an Appretiative Love , or Love of Esteem. The other Accidental; which may be defined, a Love of Tender-ness. Having taken upon me to be your Guide , not to any ordinary sort of Devotion , but to that which is the most perfect , and most agreeable to Her ; I shall make it my chief study , to represent unto you, in
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the Person of our B. Lady, a Virgin the most accomplished that ever was, of a pure Creature, in all kinds of limited Perfection, amiable in every respect, both in regard of Herself, and with reference to us; And I will endeavour to inflame your Heart with such an Affection for Her, as shall always keep equal pace with the highest Esteem of her Merits; since nothing but true Merit can justly Challenge the Rational Tribute of our Affections. I reduce the Motives we have to Love the B. Virgin, to seven: And I designedly chuse this number, because, it agreeing with the seven daies of the Week, they may furnish you, for each of them, with sufficient Entertainment, either for Meditation, or Reading, as you shall find most convenient; very different, indeed, as to the subject of them, but of equal profit to you, and equally proper to nourish within you a lively Affection towards the Virgin *Mary*; which Affection, tho' it be of the Nature of Fire, yet is the soonest extinguished of any, if we are not very careful to supply it with fuel, and new matter to feed upon.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

The first Motive of Devotion to the B. Virgin, is that singular Love which Almighty God himself bears unto Her.

AS in the Old Law no Weights were reputed Just, or lawful to be used, but what had been nicely examin'd in the famous Ballances of the Sanctuary; so, to the End th. Value we set upon things, and th. Weight, as I may say, which we give them in our Judgments, may be Just and true, it must be brought to the Infallible Test of the divine Judgment; and there weigh'd by the Esteem Almighty God himself has of them: since only his infinite Wisdom can be that *Primum Mobile*, which both in Heaven and upon Earth, ought to be the Measure and standard of all other things that are moved. So that, if I can shew that no words can make us conceive how much the Virgin Mary is beloved by Almighty God, I shall demonstrate, at the same time, that She deserves to be beloved by us, beyond all that
can

can be expressed. Now , in how great Esteem this heavenly Spouse is, in the Heart of her divine *Salomon* , I think , cannot be better understood, than by setting Her in a Parallel with other Creatures , which yet are known to be highly in his favour. *Adolescentularum* , says he, in the Canticles, *non est numerus* : Cant. 9. 7. My young Virgins are without Number. But , *Vna est perfecta Mea*. My perfect One is an Only One , *Vna est*. She is alone : She has no Equal. Wherefore, not to go in search after many proofs , I might compendiate them all in this One , and boldly affirm , that this glorious Queen alone is Dearer to her Divine Spouse, than all the rest of his heavenly Court , if put together. And yet in this, I should say no more , than what has been confidently averr'd by *S. Bonaventure* * , *S. Anselm* † , *S. Augustin* * , amongst the holy Fathers: And amongst the modern Divines, by no one with more Assurance, than by the Devout , and Learned *Suarez*, †

* *In spec. Mar c. 6.*

† *De Excel. Virg. c. 4.*

* *Apud S. Bonav. loco cit.*

† *3. p. 1. 2. Disp. 18. sect. 3.*

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when he says, that God loves the Virgin alone, more than all the other Saints together. *Deus plus amat solam Virginem, quam reliquos sanctos Omnes.* And, indeed, what proof could I pretend to bring for my Assertion, which is not already contain'd in this? For, if *Christ* loves every one of the Elect in particular, more than all the Elect together, can possibly Love *Christ*, as he certainly does, what an Excess of Love must that be, which he bears to the Virgin *Mary*? Since he loves Her more, than he Loves all the Apostles, all the Patriarchs, all the Prophets, all those Millions of Martyrs, who have suffer'd such cruel Deaths for his sake; more than all the Angels, all the Archangels, all the most sublime Quires of Seraphims: In a word, more than all the Church together, both Militant upon Earth, and Triumphant in Heaven? Infomuch, that if, by an impossible supposition, He were in a Necessity of losing either the B. Virgin, or all those I have now mention'd, and Millions more; He would sooner part with them All, than

than with Her alone. However, tho' what I have already said, is, in short, all that can be said upon this subject; Notwithstanding, as Distances are better measured step by step, than by the Eye only, so we shall better conceive the prodigious Extent of this Love and Esteem, which Almighty God has for the Virgin, if we discourse of it by Parts, and in particular, than if we should pretend to imbrace the whole under one general View.

I say, therefore, that the Virgin Mary is that great First-born in the Order of Nature, in the Order of Grace, and in the Order of Glory; who in that Triple Quality justly enjoys not only the largest Portion of the Paternal Inheritance of Almighty God, but also the best and the greatest share of his Paternal Affections. *Vna est perfecta mea. Vna est.* And first, let us see the Truth of this Assertion in the Order of Nature: it being reasonable to speak of that first, which naturally comes in the first place.

§. II.

THe first time the Eternal Word ever spoke in the distinct Creation of things, He called forth Light, *Fiat Lux*: And He called it with that loud Voice, which is heard and obeyed, even from the Abyss of Nothing, by things before they have any Being. *Fiat Lux: creata est Lux*: so that, in some sense it may be said, that Light was *Primogenita ex ore Altissimi*. Eccl. 24. 5. The First-born from the mouth of the most High. Since it was the first fruit of his Omnipotent Voice. And if so, what wonder it should be the most beautiful Creature, amongst all that were afterwards commanded into the World, by the same al-powerful Voice? A thing neither Body, nor Spirit, but something between both, made with Art and Design, to be, as it were, the Channel of that constant Correspondence and mutual communication of Influences, which was afterwards to pass between the Celestial Bodies, and the Terrestrial.

And

And here, who does not see that the Increased Wisdom intended from the very beginning of the World, to represent unto us, by this admirable Emblem of Light, the ever glorious Virgin *Mary*? A Creature, indeed; and, in that respect, infinitely inferiour to God: But yet, so immensely exalted above all other pure Creatures, that She may be said in some manner, to be in a middle state between Humane and Divine; since She was Created for no other End, but to be the Channel of Communication between Heaven and Earth, and the immediate Instrument of joyning together the two Natures, Humane and Divine, God and Man, in the strictest Union that was possible. *Ego Primogenita*, may She therefore say of Her self, with much more Reason, *Ex Ore Altissimi prodivi ante omnem Creaturam*. I am the First-born from the Mouth of the most High, before all other Creatures.

That the Virgin was not absolutely the First-born amongst Creatures, in the Order of Time, is manifest; since her temporal Birth was many Ages posteriour to the Birth of the

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World,

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World. Yet, she is said to be the First, and even to have been created from the very Beginning. *Ab initio*. Because, tho' She was not the First in the Execution of the divine Decrees, yet She was the First in the Intention of them; and the first production of God's Omnipotence, in the Order of pure Creatures; and, as such, was even the End of all the other productions. *Propter hanc*, says Saint Bernard, * *Totus mundus factus est*. For Her, the whole World was made. Not, indeed, for Her, as for it's last End; (for that can be no other than God himself) But for her, as a secondary End, and subordinate to Him; for which, the divine Architect framed this great Universe, with a most particular Design of putting it under her Dominion, and making it subject and subservient to Her, as to it's sovereign Queen. Whoever is surprised at what I here advance, shews himself to be little acquainted with the Merits of *Mary*. Our B. Saviour speaking one day to the Seraphical Saint *Teresa*, as it were, to ease himself

* *Serm. 7. in Salve Reg.*

himself of those vehement flames of Love towards her, which burnt within his Breast, told her; *If I had not already created this World, I would Create it for Thee alone.* After this, can there be any Excess in saying, that the Divine Word has already done, out of a special regard to his own B. Mother, that which, for an Occasion, he would not have stuck to have done, for a poor Handmaid of that very same Mother, and for her alone? No doubt, but we may freely say to the Virgin, without danger of saying too much; *Omnia tua sunt, Tu autem Christi, Christus autem Dei.* All that is good in Nature, is for You, great Lady, and belongs to you, as you belong to Christ, and Christ to God.

It was anciently a custom amongst the Kings of *Persia*, to divide between the chief Cities of their Dominions, the Charge and Care of providing all that belong'd to the immediate Use of the Queen Consort; that so, all might share in the honour of serving their Queen. One Town was to furnish all that belong'd to the

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Toilet , and dressing of the Head; another her Necklaces, and Bracelets of Pearl; another her Crown , Scepter and Jewels; another her Royal Robes , Mantles , Gloves , Rings , and the like; another infine Her Sandals, and so of the rest. In the same manner , we may say , that Almighty God has ordain'd all the different Species of Creatures , as so many populous Cities , for the Use and service of *Mary*. Whilst She lived an Inhabitant of this inferiour World, all Creatures were ambitious to serve her; not , indeed , to imbellish her Body , (for , that She never thought worthy of her Care) but to adorn her Soul; Each one supplying her with different matter , and new Motives to praise , and give thanks to her Lord and Creatour; to admire Him , to Love Him, to bless Him; and to raise herself above them all , by their very means , to the most sublime Contemplation of his Greatness. And thus they served the B. Virgin better , and were of more use to her alone , than ever they were before , or have been since, to all the rest of Mankind. Nay , I
may

may safely say, that in Her alone they have perfectly obtain'd the End, they were made for; which is no other, than to be, as it were, a Ladder of so many different steps, whereby we may gradually raise our selves, to the perfect knowledge, and Love of Almighty God; since the Virgin alone has ascended higher in Contemplation, by these steps, than all the rest of the World besides; and was never known to descend again, by the abuse of any Creature, as all Other Men do, by Sin; which She was never guilty of, not even the smallest. But now She is mounted upon the Throne, and has left this lower Earth (where She lived, as I may say, *Incognito*, in an humble Obscurity, known only to God, and his Angels;) to take possession of her Kingdom in Heaven; Now, I say, it is, that all the other Creatures of the Universe are more Ambitious than ever, to pay their homages and submissions to Her, and to out-do each other, in their Obsequiousness, and readiness to serve Her. In respect of Herself, they all concur together to make up one Kingdom,

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Kingdom, and to form a Court for Her to reign in, as a Sovereign. But in respect of us, they serve for so many Emblems, and symbolical Expressions, to represent unto us, by what we admire in them, the unspeakable Perfections, and singular Prerogatives of that incomparable Soul; which the Divine Architect proposed to himself, as the created Idea, by which He designed to model this stately Universe. I expressly use this term of *Created Idea*, with design. Because, on the one side, the Idea of the Divine Workmanship, is nothing else, but the increated Word itself: it being impossible for God, when he produces any thing *ad Extra*, or Extrinsecal to himself, to imitate any other Original, than his own; On the other side, we find the Virgin expressly glorying to have concurr'd with her Maker, in composing the whole frame of the Universe; *Cum eo eram cuncta componens.* Prov. 8. 30. Whence it seems to follow, that She cooperated to that great Work, either as a secondary End, *for which*, as we have already observed, or, as

a Model, *by Which*: Unless we had rather say, and, in my Opinion, with greater probability, that she concurr'd in both those manners; as the End, and as the Model. So that, Almighty God, *Quando preparabat Caelos*, &c. Prov. 8. 27. When he was preparing the Heavens, confining the Abysses within their respective bounds, suspending the Clouds in the Air, poising the Fountains of Waters, and the Foundations of the Earth; When he was producing the Sun, Moon, and Stars; forming the Minerals, Vegetables, and living Animals; Infine, when he was ordering and disposing all that beautiful variety of Nature, which this World is composed of; He intended nothing else but a Copy, in which all those Excellent Prerogatives and Perfections should be separately dispersed, which afterwards, at the time appointed, he designed should all be reunited in One, in the Person of his own Virgin Mother, as in a Nobler World, than that which he at first Created. This Interpretation is exactly conformable to what I find
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in Saint Bernard, * in his Sermon upon the Virgin ; Where he says, that Almighty God has Created two Worlds. One for Man , which is this we now inhabite : the other for Himself , which is the Soul of *Mary*. And this , as the more exact Copy of the increated Idea , served, as it were , for an Original, to draw the other by. If this be supposed, Who can call into question the Truth of another , no less sublime than pious thought of Saint *Bernardin* ? † Who doubts not to affirm, that if Almighty God , after the notorious disobedience of our first Parents , in the Terrestrial Paradise, did not immediately destroy the World he had so lately created , it was , in a most singular manner , for the Virgin *Mary*'s sake. Wherein Almighty God seems to have acted, like the prudent Husbandman , Who spares an old wither'd Oak from the Ax and the fire , for a Swarm of Bees , he discovers in the hollow of it. This Reflexion of Saint *Bernardin*'s , if not so certain , as it is
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* *Serm. de B. Maria.*

† *Bernardin. in quodam Sermone.*

ingeniously pious, seems however to me to have all the appearance, of a well grounded Probability. For, if Almighty God, out of a special regard to his most B. Mother, had a little before created this World out of Nothing, as we have now discoursed: and this, not without a Knowledge of *Adam* and *Eve's* early Rebellion; What wonder, if, for the same special regard he had for the Virgin, he should also preserve it in Being, tho' now become Criminal? Especially, since he as certainly knew what he designed to do, to repair the Fault, as he knew before, that it would be committed. It seems as if Almighty God intended to proceed with those first Rebels, and Prevaricators of his Commands, as we read that *Salomon* did, some Ages after, with the ungrateful Priest *Abiathar*. Thou art guilty, said he, of a thousand Deaths, 'tis true; But I change the penalty of Death, which, according to thy merits thou shouldst suffer this very day, into that of Banishment; because I respect the Sanctity of that Ark, which thou hast so often born upon

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upon thy Shoulders. *Equidem Vir*
mortis es, sed hodie te non interficiam,
quia portasti Arcam Domini. 3. Reg. 2.
26. And thus we may imagine Al-
mighty God to have spoken to those
two first Ring-Leaders of Rebellion.
If I were to punish You, as you
have deserved, I should, this very
moment, crush the Heads of you
Both, as of two pestiferous Serpents;
and extinguish in you at Once, the
Seed of your whole Posterity; Who,
infected with the Poison of your evil
Example, would only learn to
transgress my Laws, as You have
done. But, because I foresee, that
from your Blood there will be born
one day, a Virgin, wholly unlike
your selves; Who shall be the Liv-
ing Ark, to receive within her
Virginal Womb a Son, who, at
present, is only within my own
Breast; Therefore, I am content that
the sentence of Death, which other-
wise I should now pronounce against
You, be changed into that of a
perpetual Banishment from this
place of Delights, so little becoming
such Rebels as You are.

§. III.

And thus we are already enter'd, in a manner, insensibly upon the noblest Tenement, as I may call it, of this grand Primogeniture, or Birth-right of the Virgin's. It had been no such great Honour for her, that the World had been Created at first, and afterwards preserved from destruction, for her sake; if, as she was most singularly beloved in the Order of Nature, she had not also been as singularly privileged, in the Order of Grace. *Tertullian* calls Man, *Curam divini Ingenij*; The Care and sollicitude of the divine Wisdom; as if then only Almighty God employ'd his Whole Omnipotence, when he had Man to Create. How much would this have less of the Hyperbole, if apply'd to *Mary*? The greatness of this surprising Effect of the divine Power and Wisdom, is a cogent Motive for us to conclude, that the first Increated Cause was totally taken up in the production of it, with all the attention of his infinite

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finite Understanding. And therefore when he made the Heavens , they were said to be the Work of his Fingers. *Videbo Cælos tuos , opera digitorum tuorum.* Psal. 8. 4. But, when afterwards he shew'd unto the World that Master-piece of his divine Art, his own most B. Mother , he is said, (and that even by herself , as humble as she was) to have exerted the whole strength , and power of his Arm. *Fecit potentiam in Brachio suo.* So great a Work was the incomparable *Mary*.

Let us now , if you please, contemplate a little the Design of this great Work , in those profound Volumes of Predestination, where it is certain , she holds the first place, as being the first Predestinated to Grace , in the Rank of pure Creatures. *Ego primogenita* &c.

For the Ground-work and Foundation of this grand Primogeniture, we must suppose that the Virgin never had any other place , in the Designs of Almighty God , than in Quality of his own Mother. And this is the Rank she has possess'd from all Eternity , in the Order of Creatures.

ures. When the Apostle Saint Paul, speaking of *Christ* our Lord to the *Romans*, ch. I. tells them, that He comes from the seed of *David*, as being the Son of *Mary*; *Qui factus est ei ex semine David*; He immediately adds, *Qui predestinatus est filius Dei*, That he is predestinated the Son of God. What could the Apostle mean, by joyning the temporal Birth of *Christ*, in which the Virgin is so nearly concern'd, in the same context with his Eternal Predestination, but only to shew that those two Predestinations of *Christ*, and of *Mary*, were inseparable one from the other? And, that as *Christ* never appears in the Decrees of Eternity, but as the Son of *Mary*, so *Mary* never appears in the same Decrees, but as the Mother of *Christ*. This Pearl, and this Shell are so straitly united together, that all the power in Nature, or even above Nature, can never keep them asunder; And we cannot possibly look upon the One, without casting an Eye, at the same time, upon the other; so great is the Connexion between them. *Si Christus non esset.*

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Caro, says Saint Ephrem the Syrian, *quorsum Maria in Mundum introducta* ? If *Christ* was not truly *Flesh*, to what purpose was *Mary* brought into the World ? Whereby he would give us to understand, that *Mary* being a Work of the Divine Power, purely intended for the Word Incarnate; it follow'd, that as, without *Christ*, she could not have obtain'd the End of her Creation, so, if he was not to become Man, by taking flesh from Her, She herself had never been. Nor is this all. For, not only the Predestination of this Mother was included, by necessary Connexion, in the Predestination of this Son; But, they were both wrought, as I may say, upon the same Pattern; so that, as *Christ* resembled no body more than his B. Mother, in the Composition of his Body, and features of his Face; so *Mary* resembled no body better than her Divine Son, in the perfection, and, if I may say so, the features of her Soul. All this I am the more inclined to believe, because I find the Church makes no difficulty to apply unto the Virgin those very terms, *Ego sapientia, &c.* which

which in the Book of Proverbs and elsewhere, are certainly intended by the H. Ghost, to be meant of the Increased Wisdom it self, her divine Son. And what confirms me still more in this Opinion, is, that in the sacred Canticles, *Christ* himself calls Her so often his Sister; that we might understand that she is the first and Only Copy of that first and Only Original; and that She, and *Christ* (if I may be allow'd to use the Expression) were Both born at a Birth, in the divine Decrees: And that therefore, as *Christ* is the First-born by Nature, so, the Virgin is also a true First-born, but of an inferiour Order, and only by Adoption.

This being granted, who can express or even conceive the degree of preference, which the Virgin possesses, upon this account, in the Heart of Almighty God, above all his other Saints and Favourites? *Adolescentularum non est Numerus. Vna est perfecta mea. Vna est.* The other Saints, if compared with the Virgin, are like the Stars in presence of the Sun. They are in the Firmament,

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indeed, but they give no Light; Because the Excessive Brightness of the Sun not only out-shines every one of them in particular, but even Eclipses the whole complex of them together. She is that great First-born, to whom all the rest must yield. *Ego Primogenita.* Nay, I may say, that the other Saints were so far from challenging any Right to the Primogeniture, in the divine Ideas, that they did not so much as appear in the quality of Children; but on the contrary, as Enemies to God, and Slaves of the Devil: for, in the Eternal fore-knowledge which Almighty God had of them, He first saw them Sinners before he saw them Just. The Virgin alone never appear'd in the quality of a Sinner. But her first beginnings were in Greatness, Sanctity and Glory. She sprung forth from the divine Ideas, like the Pomegranate, with the Crown upon her Head, as Queen and Sovereign of the whole glorious Multitude of the Elect. And therefore she alone was always compleatly amiable in herself, and always perfectly

fectly beloved by Almighty God ; since she was the Only Object of the Divine Love , which never had the least mixture of any thing that was Repugnant to that Love , as never having been guilty of the least Sin , or even shadow of Sin ; and consequently , 'tis her singular Prerogative alone , to glory , as she justly may , that Almighty God , has always enjoy'd the actual Possession of her. The other Saints , indeed , have always belong'd to God , in propriety and sovereign dominion : But he has not always had the actual Possession of them : since all , and Every One of them , the Virgin *Mary* only excepted , have been for some time , in the power of the Infernal Enemy ; Who , by the fall of *Adam* , robb'd Man of his Original Justice , and God , in a manner , of his Right to his own Images. So that , of the whole mass of Mankind , no One , but the Virgin alone , can say with Truth , *Dominus possedit me ab initio*. Prov. 8. 22. *The Lord hath possessed me from the beginning*. Because the sovereign Dominion Almighty God had over
Her,

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Her, and his actual possession of Her, by grace and Adoption, were never separated one from the other, not even for the least indivisible moment of Time. Whence it is, that if the other Saints and Elect were afterwards Redeem'd by *Christ*, the Repairer of Mankind, with that sort of Reparative Redemption, whereby they were rescued from a Slavery actually incurr'd; *Mary*, as the First-born of all, and by the singular privilege of her Birth-right, was Redeem'd with another more perfect sort of Preservative Redemption, whereby she was specially prevented from ever incurring that very Slavery. And this *Christ* our Lord did, with so great an Excess of his love towards Her, that, to the End he might Redeem her in this perfect manner, he hasten'd his coming into the World. But, what do I say Hasten'd? Saint *Bernardin* * tells us, that He not only hasten'd it, but even effected it for her sake; since he came into the World, more to Redeem *Mary* alone, with that nobler sort of

* *Bernardin Serm. 51. de Conc. c. 3.*

of Redemption already mention'd, than to Redeem all the rest of Mankind. And this, perchance, is what Saint *Ildefonsus* * alludes to, when he says, that the Virgin was, not only the greatest Work, but even the Only One, which God had in view, when he design'd to take upon him Humane Flesh. *Virgo, Mater Dei, solum Opus Incarnationis Dei mei.* Not but that God, when he became Man, absolutely design'd the Redemption of all Mankind, none excluded: but because the Redemption of the rest of Mortals, if compared with that of the B. Virgin, might be called, in some manner, only an Essay towards a perfecter Work: *Mary*, indeed, was a Work worthy that an infinite Treasure, such as was that of the Blood of *Iesus*, should be disbursed for her Redemption. On Her was truly well spent all that *Christ* did, and suffer'd upon Earth; His Labours, his Sweat, his Torments, his Passion, his Death. And in effect, *Christ* has conferr'd upon the Virgin alone, incomparably more Graces, and more Glory,

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* *Ildefons. L. de Virg. Mar. c. 10.*

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out of the immense Capital of his infinite Merits, than upon all other Men, and Angels together. And to the End that *Mary*, as the First-born of Grace, should have a just Title to the greatest share of that inexhaustible Income of graces, which was to be taken from the Common Stock of the Redemption, I find all those admirable Prerogatives, and Qualifications united in Her, as in one common Center, which in others are, not only separately distributed, but oftentimes so opposite and incompatible together, that it is not naturally possible they should ever meet in the same Subject. For, as in the Terrestrial Paradise, in order to render it more Charming and delicious, the disparate and almost Contrary Beauties of Spring and Autumn, were so friendly united together, that they seem'd to compose but one Season: so, in order to render this great Queen of the World more plentifully Rich, in the Ornaments of Grace, I find that Almighty God has united in her single Person, the purest Virginity, with the most fruitful

fruitful Maternity , the most elevated Contemplation with the most lively Action , the tenderest and most affectionate Compassion with the most heroical Courage; in a word, the highest of Dignities with the most profound Humility. Here, indeed, when I compare this Royal Spouse, with the other beloved Spouses of *Christ*, methinks, I see the spotless Lilly, that Beautiful Queen of Flowers, rising above the rest of the vulgar flowers, in all the grandure and Majesty of a Sovereign, and yet gently bowing down her crown'd Head, with all the Modesty of an humble Handmaid.

But we shall have a better occasion hereafter, of summing up the whole Capital of *Mary's* Riches, in this kind. For the present, were it allow'd me to put a construction of my own upon the Virgin's own Words, I would only say, that she is so immensely great in the Order of Grace, that She even Magnifies her own Maker. *Magnificat Anima mea Dominum.* My Soul, says she of Herself, Magnifies the Lord. But how, and in what sense, could the Virgin, so humble as she was, arrogate

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arrogate unto herself a thing , which is not possible even to God : Since God himself cannot make himself greater than he is. The meaning of this , is ; That the Virgin does not magnify her Lord, and Maker , by making him greater in himself, or adding any new perfection to him, which he had not before : for this is absolutely impossible , and no body doubts it. But, as the Atmosphere often magnifies the body of the Sun , not by adding any thing to it , but by making it appear greater to our Eyes ; so, the Virgin may be said to Magnify God , inasmuch as she makes him appear greater unto us; by discovering unto us those wonderful Effects of the divine Power, which without Her, we had certainly never known ; and this for two Reasons: The first, Because she has given to Almighty God the greatest Prerogative, and the noblest Title he enjoys, next to his own intrinsecal Attributes ; which is , to be the God of God himself. For , before he had such a Mother , he was only the God of *Abraham* , the God of *Isaac* , the
God

God of *Iacob*, the God of all the other Just; But now, by her means, he is truly the God of *Christ*, and consequently the God of God himself. The second Reason is, Because, to make the Virgin a fit Companion for *Christ* to converse with upon Earth, and, as Saint *Augustin* terms her, *Dignam Digni*, The only Mother worthy of such a Son, as *Christ* was the only Son worthy of such a Mother: To qualify her, I say, for such an Employment, far greater Treasures of Grace were requisite, than ever were employ'd for the sanctifying of all the other Just. Wherefore, if, the greater the Effect is, the more it demonstrates the greatness, and Power of the Cause; we may truly say, that *Mary* magnifies her Lord and Creator, since he appears much greater in her Soul alone, than in all the other pure Creatures he has ever produced. With truth therefore, may She intone her *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*. And we with equal Truth, may answer in full Quire, with the Words of Saint *Peter Chrysologus*; *

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* *Chrysol. serm. 140.*

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Tanta enim est Virgo , ut quantus sit Deus , satis ignoret , qui hujus Virginis mentem non stupet, animum non miratur. So great is this Virgin , that He must be very little acquainted with the Greatness of God , who is not astonish'd at the greatness of her Soul. Which, in my Opinion, is said of the Virgin , with as much reason , as it was said heretofore of *Salomon* , that no one could comprehend the Immenseness of his Riches , tho' otherwise so celebrated by Fame , Who had not seen his Temple. In a word, to weigh the Sanctity of *Mary* , I find that the Holy Doctors observe no Other Rule , than that of a certain proportion between Her and *Christ* , the Mother and the Son. *Scire vultis qualis sit Mater , Cogitate qualis sit filius.* Will you know , says Saint *Eucherius* , who this Mother is ? Consider who this Son is. And this is the Ballance , which that holy Father puts into our hands , as the only one proper to judge of the great Sanctity of *Mary* by. I know it is a common practice amongst Jewellers , to set an equal price upon the Jewel , and the Enamel
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in which the Jewel is set. But, in our Case, this would not be just; For, a Jewel of this nature, such as is the Son of *Mary*, being of an infinite value, cannot be parallel'd by any Enamel whatsoever. Wherefore, to allow a reasonable discount on the Virgin's side, as I shall ever Adore That Son, as infinitely superiour to That Mother, so, I shall always honour That Mother, as incomparably above all the other Saints: and I shall ever acknowledge her to be the First-born of them all, in the Order of Grace; the only Mother singularly Chosen for that Only Son, the Delight of the Divine Heart, immensely Loving her divine Spouse, and immensely beloved by Him. And, indeed, if this mutual Love were not, in a manner, infinite on both sides, how could she glory, as she does, without distinction, *Dilectus meus mihi, & Ego illi Cant 2. 16.* My beloved unto me, and I unto Him. This would certainly be too great an Arrogance, to put herself, as it were, upon the Level with Her Beloved, if what she said were

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not true. For, as Saint Bernard argues most divinely, *Dum dicit, Dilectus meus mihi & Ego illi; Aut sponsa in immensum gloriatur aut sponsa in immensum diligitur.* When the Virgin says so confidently, *My beloved unto me, and I unto Him;* Either, says this H. Father, This Spouse is immensely beloved, or she glories of her self, immensely too much.

§. IV.

FInally, if Nature be intended for Grace, and Grace for Glory; it will be no hard matter to infer, that, as the Virgin was the great First-born in those two Orders, so, she must also be in the Third. And not only the First-born, but the Only-born of Her Kind, Priviledged above all, Head and Chief of all. *Vna est perfecta mea. Vna est. My perfect one, is an Only One.* In the Kingdom of Glory there is no Seat so high, for any pure Creature, as even to serve for a foot-stool to her Throne. *Inter Matrem Dei, & servos Dei infinitum est discrimen.** Between

*S. Ioan. Damas. Ora. 1. de dormit. Virg.

tween the Mother of God, says Saint John Damascen, and the other Servants of God, there is an infinite distance. So that, the B. Virgin being, as she is, exalted in Heaven above the highest Seraphims, more than the Empyrean is raised above the other Celestial Spheres, makes a Quire by herself Alone, giving Light to others, and receiving it from no one, but from the Fountain it self of all Light. * Oh! if that kind Angel, who, so many Ages ago, invited Saint John the Evangelist to contemplate her glory, in that truly fortunate Island of Patmos, with those comfortable words, *Veni, ostendam tibi Sponsam Agni. Apoc. 21. Come, I will shew Thee the Spouse of the Lamb*; Would also one day call upon Us, to be Spectators of that glorious Object! What Beauties should we then Behold, which Eye hath never seen, nor Ear hath heard, nor the Heart of man conceived? We should see that the Dignity of this lovely Spouse assumed to glory, is so excessively beyond

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* *Suar. in 3. p. tom. 2. disp. 21. sect. ult.*

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the reach of humane Understandings to comprehend, that tho' they are themselves raised, upon the top of a very high Mountain, *In Montem magnum & altum*, yet this will not help them to make a full discovery of her greatness. If she will be known, she must descend good part of the way herself, to meet them, *Descendat de Calo à Deo*. We should see her appearing in her new, and richest Attire, suitable to the quality and dignity of her divine Spouse; *Ornatam Viro suo*. Set off, and adorned for Him: or, as other Interpreters will have it, *with Him*, as if he himself were her greatest Ornament, and, as it were, the Nuptial garment of her Heavenly Espousals. Other Saints are clothed, indeed, with Light; but the Virgin is clothed with the Sun it self, from whom their Light proceeds. The Others, as being only made to receive, and not to give to Almighty God, shall have for their chief Ornaments, the common indowments of Glory, and other supernatural gifts; But the Virgin, who was made not only to receive, but

but also to give to Almighty God, shall be adorn'd with the Giver himself of all those gifts. *Ornatam Viro suo*. In a word, if that glorious Scene were to be open'd, and the Curtain drawn from before our Eyes, we should see that Beautiful Spouse of the Lamb of God, *Habentem claritatem Dei*. Shining more glorious than a thousand Suns, in the splendour, and Brightness of God himself. But it is not yet time for us, to soar so high. Wherefore, since in this mortal state, we are not able to fix our weak Eyes upon so dazling an Object, let us respectfully cast them down, and content our selves, for the present, to supply the clear and happy Evidence of Seeing, with the Obscure, but meritorious Certainty of Believing.

And, indeed, what can we spend this life in better, than in honouring, to the best of our power, this heavenly Queen, and admiring so stupendious a Work of the divine Power, in which God himself appears so great? That Virgin, always worthy of Love, and always beloved

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loved : That Beautiful *Iris* of our Safety , form'd by the purest Rays of the divine Sun of Justice himself: That Mirour of his Power , Temple of his Grace , Theatre of his Glory: Not only made , as Other pure Creatures are , according to his Image , but made so to the life, that Nothing can resemble him more. * Framed of the Rib of the second *Adam* , that is , nearer to *Christ* 's Heart , than all the rest of the World ; and consequently better qualified than all Others , to be his inseparable Companion, whether upon Earth , or in Heaven : In a word , his Mother , his Sister , his Spouse , his Only beloved *Mary*. We are sure never to be mistaken in loving her , when God himself , the Author of all Love , shews us the way how to Love her. And it cannot but be a great Honour to us, to follow his Example. *Gloria magna est sequi Dominum. Eccl. 23. 38.*

CHAP.

* *S. Thom. Opusc. de Charit.*

C H A P. II.

*The second Motive of Devotion to the
B. Virgin, is her great Dignity.*

§. I.

ALl the worth & value of the Naker, or Mother of Pearl, is the Rich Pearl it self, of which she is the Mother, and which by the secret influences of the Heavens, she conceives and ingenders, as I may say, within her Bosom, which is only open to this pretious Treasure, and inviolably shut up to every thing else. In the same manner, the only true Standard, whereby we may take the just measure of the honour which is due to *Mary*, is that most divine Fruit, which by the mysterious Operation of the Holy Ghost, She conceiv'd within her Virginal Womb: Tho' not to keep it to herself alone, like that covetous Shell unwilling to part with her Treasure; but to bestow it liberally upon the World, for the common

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common Benefit, and Reparation of Mankind. This is the Plummert, as I may call it, which Saint Thomas makes use of, to fathom the great Dignity of this incomparable Virgin. The Dignity of Mother of God, says this Saint, carries with it a sort of an Infinity: And the reason is, because it rises to such a prodigious Height, that God himself cannot make a greater. *Beata Virgo, ex hoc quod est Mater Dei, habet quandam Dignitatem infinitam ex bono infinito quod est Deus; & ex hac parte non potest aliquid fieri melius, sicut non potest aliquid esse melius Deo.* * For the Virgin to increase in Dignity, it would be necessary for God to increase in Perfection. But, till we can find a God, greater than Him she bore in her Womb, we must not expect to find a Mother, greater than the Mother of God. In making Her, the Almighty has made a last Effort of his Omnipotent Power. He can, when he pleases, and that with a single *Fiat*, make a Firmament more spacious than This, and enrich'd with brighter Stars:

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* S. Thom. 1. p. q. 25. ar. 6.

He can make a Mountain higher than *Olympus*, an Ocean of a larger extent than this we sail upon, and an Earth more fruitful and more delicious, than what we now Inhabit. All this, and infinitely more, he can do with a Finger, or a Breath of his mouth: But, it is the very *Non plus ultra* of his infinite Power, to make a greater Mother, than the *Virgin Mary*. In making this Virgin Mother, he has already conferr'd upon all pure Creatures, all the Worth and Excellency they are capable of, as long as they remain in the condition of pure Creatures. So that, if we should suppose this Case to happen, that the number of Mothers of God should increase in the World, (as it would doubtless fall out, if the other two Divine Persons should borrow Humane flesh from two other Virgins) The World, for all this, would not increase in any degree of Excellency, or Nobility, more than it has at present, according to the sentiment of Saint *Bernardin*; Who makes the supposition, and doubts not to affirm, that *Nihil inde cresceret Orbi*

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Orbi Nobilitatis. * In *Mary* ; the World actually enjoys as much as it can receive , if not in Number, at least in Weight of Worth , Excellency , and Dignity.

It must therefore be acknowledged , that this August Title of Mother of God , is an Abyss of Perfection. And that from this Abyss , as from a never failing Spring , must flow those rich streams of Honour and Praise , which are due to *Mary*, as I may say , without Stint or Measure. For , as the being the natural Son of God , is the Origine of all those extraordinary Honours, which are due to *Christ* ; so , the being the natural Mother of God, is the Origine and source of all the Extraordinary Honours due unto *Mary*. And consequently , who can pretend to set a just value upon her incomparable Merits ? Truly , no one but that God himself , who made her so great. For , as Saint *Bernardin* assures us again ; *Tanta est perfectio Virginis , ut soli Deo cognoscenda reservetur.* † So great is the Perfection

* *S. Bernardin. tom. 1. serm. 61.*

† *Bernardin. serm. 51. de Conc.*

fection of the Virgin, that the Knowledge of it is reserv'd to God alone: and therefore 'twould be Rashness and Presumption in us weak Mortals, to fix our Eyes upon so dazzling a Light. For, in effect, what Eye is strong enough to look fixedly upon a well polished Crystal, when the Sun beats full upon it, and fills it with all his Light? No other certainly, but that of the Sun it self. So great splendour, and such Torrents of Reflected Light, would be as insupportable to any other Eye, as the direct Rays themselves of that Fountain of Light. Wherefore, the Angels themselves, those clear-sighted Spirits, and penetrating Understandings must never hope to arrive to a full Comprehension of *Mary*. *Mary* is, in a manner, as incomprehensible to any Created Intellect, as is that Divine Sun himself, who shining directly upon Her in his Meridian glory, fills Her with the whole immensity of his Divinity. Observe those very Angels, and see how they seem to be equally in amaze at the solemn Triumph of Both, the Son and the Mother, en-

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tring into the glories of Heaven.
*Quis est iste qui venit de Edom, in his
vestibus de Bosra ! Iste formosus in stola
sua, gradiens in multitudine fortitudinis
sue ? Isa. 63. 1.* Who is this that
cometh from Edom, with his gar-
ments died from Bosra, Beautiful
in his Apparel, and walking in the
great power of his strength ! This
is the Amazement of the Angels, at
the Triumph of Christ. *Qua est ista
qua ascendit de Deserto delicijs affluens,
innixa super Dilectum suum ? Cant. 8.
5.* Who is this that ascends from
the Desert, flowing with Delights,
and leaning upon her Beloved ? Be-
hold the Astonishment of the same
Angels at the glorious Triumph of
Mary. All the difference observ'd by
these Angels between Christ, and
Mary, is, that Mary, *Innititur super
Dilectum suum*, is leaning upon her
Beloved: and Christ, *graditur in mul-
titudine fortitudinis sue*, Walketh in
the power of his own strength. As
for the rest, Their Magnificence,
Pomp, and glorious Appearance was
so excessive in Both, that the An-
gels seem'd to be equally surprised
at Both : Because the Light of that
glorious

glorious Sun darting at once all his Rays upon that spotless Crystal : and The Light of that Crystal reflecting back again all the same Rays , was an Accumulation of Light , too strong even for those Eagle-sighted Angels , not to be dazzled with it. But what do I say the Angels ? Even *Mary* her self, as great as She is , cannot comprehend her own greatness. For, tho' she could conceive, and lodge within her self a God made Man, Yet she could never conceive with her Understanding , how great a thing it was , to receive a God within her Womb. And therefore when Gratitude obliged Her to a thankful acknowledgment for the great honour she found her self assumed unto , she could not, as *S. Augustin* observes , find terms sufficient to express the Height of her own Dignity. *Nec ipsa explicare potuit quod capere potuit.* She was forced to commendiate all , in the general terms of *Great Things* operated in Her, by the Almighty. *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est.* Which was as much as to say, that it was in vain to seek

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for any other measure than the Divine Omnipotence it self , to take the just dimensions of so great a Temple of the Divinity , as she Her self was. And perchance this is what the Angel alluded to , when announcing unto the Virgin this eminent Dignity we are now speaking of , he used these Words , *Virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi.* Luc. 1. 35. *The power of the most High shall Overshadow Thee.* He did not say absolutely *Obumbrabit Te* ; as if that immense Light which was to overshadow the Virgin , was to render Her absolutely invisible , even to God himself : But he said , *Obumbrabit tibi* , that is , *Te tibi* , to signify that the Overshadowing was to be such , as to hide her from her self , and from her own Eyes , that she might not even know Her self. Just as when a Person is environed with a bright, but thick Cloud of Light, the stronger the Light is that surrounds him, the less he sees of himself within it.

Now , tho' the Dignity of the Virgin Mary be in a manner Infinite, and consequently 'twould be Presumption in us , to pretend to a
through

through Comprehension of it ; since, as the Philosopher says , whatsoever is Infinite, is also Unintelligible ; notwithstanding , it is but very Reasonable that Her true Clients should endeavour to attain to as perfect a knowledge of Her , as may be had by Industry ; that their very Endeavour may be the first Tribute of that Honour, they desire to pay unto her great Merits. Let us therefore divide this whole Subject into different Heads : and by considering every one apart , we will endeavour to make our best advantage of the little we can comprehend of so sublime an Object. The little which Astronomers understand of the Heavens and Stars with probability , is of more use to them , than the much which Geographers discover of the Earth with Evidence , is to the Geographers.

§. II.

THis Maternity therefore may be consider'd first , as it were , in a material sense. And altho' this be the smallest commendation of it, yet in it self it is so sublime, and so

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great, that no humane thought can reach to comprehend it. For 'tis certain, beyond all Dispute, that some part of the Virginal Body of *Mary* was hypostatically United to the Divine Person, both in the first Original formation of *Christ's* Body by the divine power, and afterwards in the first Increasing of it, by the Nourishment he receiv'd from the Virgin immediately after. This being supposed, 'tis highly probable for several Reasons, that the first Substance which *Iesus* borrow'd from his most pure Mother, is still remaining in his now glorious Body; increased indeed, but nothing changed. *Caro Christi*, says St. Augustin, *Caro est Maria*, *et quamvis gloria Resurrectionis fuerit magnificata, eadem tamen mansit qua assumpta est de Mariâ.* * And after him St. Peter Damian diving still deeper into this Mystery, and ravish'd into an Extasy of admiration, doubts not to affirm that God was in *Mary* by Identity. *Cum Deus in alijs rebus sit tribus modis, in Virgine fuit quarto speciali modo, scilicet per* *Iden-*

* *Serm. de Assum. c. 5.*

Identitatem, quia idem est quod Ipsa. Hinc taceat & Contremiscat omnis Creatura: Quis enim audeat aspicere tanta Dignitatis immensitatem? * Almighty God is in all other Things three different ways, says this Saint, by his Essence, by his Power, and by his Presence. But in the Virgin he was in a fourth special manner, to wit, by Identity, as being one and the same thing with Her. Therefore let every Creature be silent, and tremble, and not dare to behold a Dignity so immensely above his capacity to comprehend. 'Tis the Opinion of some, that the Heart of the Child, in the Mother's Womb, has no proper Motion of its own, but is only moved by the Motion of the Mother's Heart. Tho' I do not look upon this to be true, yet 'tis certain that the Child in the Womb has no Respiration: and therefore it may truly be said to live by the Mother's Breath: and consequently that the Virgin, as long as she bore the Word Incarnate within her Womb, was in some manner his Life, because she gave him Breath: and

* *Serm. de Nativ. Virg.*

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and for the same Reason, the Word Incarnate, for the time that he remained in that Virginal confinement, might acknowledge Her to be his Life, and his Breath; and thus, he was *Idem cum Ipsa*, One and the same thing with her, One Life, & One Breath. This is also the Opinion of St. Thomas, who looks upon the Child and the Mother, to be but One thing, in the same Nature, as the Tree and the Fruit are One; And for this Reason, he dates the Commission of our Guardian Angels, to guard and defend us, not from our Conception, but from our Nativity; that is, when the Fruit thoroughly ripe drops from the Tree * According to this Doctrine, he might truly say, that this ever Blessed Fruit of this incomparable Mother, was so much One thing with her, that He was *Idem cum ipsa*; Because he was truly *Fructus ventris*, The Fruit of her Womb.

§. III.

* S. Thom. 1. p. q. 113. art. 3.

§. III.

HE must have little, or no Understanding, who do's not find it totally absorpt in Admiration of such wonders: and yet, as I said before, the least of them all is this Maternity consider'd in a material sense. What will it be then, if we consider it in a moral sense? That is, inasmuch as it implies all those Prerogatives which are due unto it, according to its natural exigency? I confess that the very thought of them astonishes me, and that I am quite lost in the Contemplation of them. For the Divine Maternity, under this moral Consideration, is absolutely the highest preferment a pure Creature can be assumed unto, without passing the bounds of a pure Creature. 'Tis the straitest Conjunction possible of a Creature with the Sovereign Increased Good. It is such a bordering upon the Divinity, notwithstanding the infinite distance between God, and any thing that is Created, that *St. Thomas* could not find any more proper

proper terms to express it in, than by saying of it, that by its Operation, it came the nearest of any thing to the Divinity. *Operatione sua fines Divinitatis propinquius attingit.* * And in this sense, he styles our Lady, *Affinem Deo*, that is, according to the Interpretation of Cajetan, *Confining upon God.* † Tho', no doubt, she might as properly be said in the true sense of that word *Affinis*, to be a Relation and a Kinswoman of God, as she truly is, and ought to be called his Mother. For this reason likewise, there is a peculiar Worship due unto Her, which is proper to Her alone, and superiour to all that is, or may be granted to any other Saint. Because her Dignity of Mother of God, is of an Order far superiour to that of all other Saints, or Angels, and belongs, in some manner, to that of the Hypostatical Union, inasmuch as it has a necessary Connexion with it. Hence it is, that the Virgin, in the state of Glory, makes a Quire by her
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* *S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 103. art. 4. ad sec.*

† *Cajet. ibid.*

self alone, as I have already observed; and is more exalted above the other Princes of the Empyrean, than the Empyrean itself, tho' made to be the Court and Palace of a God, is raised above the other inferiour Heavens, which were only design'd for the use and benefit of Men.

Oh! that I could express in thy behalf, great Mother of God, those Sentiments I have conceiv'd of Thee within my Heart! But alas, I fear my Words will fall short of what my Thoughts suggest. However I hope the following Reflexion will help me out, and make me be better understood. All the World, with good Reason, gives great honour and prayse to that renown'd Mother of the Machabees, because she gave unto the World seven such brave and heroical Champions; who not only despised the barbarous Cruelty of an *Antiochus*, but even insulted over that fierce and haughty Tyrant. Imagine now with your self that this Mother had given to the World, not only this small, tho' generous handful of Martyrs, but also those Squadrons of ten Thousand
more

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more , who died for Christ upon Croffes , on the famous Mount *Ararat* : Where sprinkling with their blood those otherwise barren Mountains of *Armenia* , they enriched them with nobler Palms , as tokens of their Victories , than ever *Palestine* could boast of. What an increase of honour would this be ? Again, if she had been Mother not only to those Squadrons of ten Thousand glorious Martyrs , but to that whole Army of full Eleven Millions, which *Genebrardus* computes to have been in the Church, from the Beginning of it , to his days ; What should we say then ? But to go on. If to all those Millions of Martyrs already mention'd , we should add far greater Numbers still of Confessors , Anchorets , Prelates , Preachers , Teachers, and Virgins , who by their learned Writings , and Vertuous Actions have no less illustrated the peaceful Times of the Church , than the Martyrs have done the suffering Times of it , by their glorious combats , Persecutions , and Blood : and that this Heroin had been the Mother of them all ; Would not such a

Mother

Mother, do you think, well deserve that the H. Ghost himself should, as I may say, take Pen in hand with much more Reason, than he did for that happy Woman, who was only Mother of the Machabees, and for an Everlasting Monument of her glory, should leave this high Encomium of her to all future Ages,

Supra modum autem Mater mirabilis, & bonorum memoria digna. 2. Mac. 7.

as of a Woman wonderful beyond measure, and worthy to live in the memory of all good Men? And yet what would such a Mother be, even tho' we should suppose her still further to be the Mother of all the Blessed in Heaven, and (were that also possible) of the whole Angelical Hierarchy; What would such a Mother be, I say, in comparison of the Mother of God? Not so much as worthy to be her Handmaid. Guess from hence what Honour is due to *MARY*.

But you'll say perchance, that this Maternity is indeed a Dignity full of Majesty, and a great Title, but a Dignity only, a fruitless empty Name, and nothing more. Quite

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the contrary. This Maternity is so far from being an empty Name, that it is rather like unto the shady Groves of *Libanus*, where charming Beauty, and rich Plenty grew upon the same Trees: That is to say, the quality of Mother of God, in the Virgin, was a Dignity which yielded her such Plenty of the richest fruit, that thereby a Right and Dominion was settled upon her, not only over all the immense Treasures of her Divine Son, * but also over his very Person; whom for that Reason she could truly command with the Authority of a Mother. *Iosue*, that first Commander of the great God of Armies, fearing lest his Enemies already defeated, and put to flight, might escape the fury of his pursuing Sword, and find that safety under the Obscurity of the approaching Night, which they could not hope for, by flying before him, with an Assurance more than humane, commanded the Sun to stand: Ambitious, if I may say so, to have that Prince of the Planets, and Father of Light, for Witness and Spectator

* *Suar. in 3. p. to. 2. D. 1. sec. 2.*

ctator of his Victory. The Sun, to the astonishment of all Nature, which, till then, had never seen so notable a Dispensation from her establish'd Laws, immediately stood in the midst of his swiftest Career, for the space of a whole Day. *Stetitque Sol in medio Cœli spatio unius diei.* Jofu. 10. 13 This doubtless, was a surprising Miracle: But how much more surprising was that, which was seen within the Walls of Mary's poor Cottage in Nazareth, not for the space of one Day only, but for Thirty years together? Here indeed, was to be seen a Sun of another Nature, now at a stand, now in motion, and now at a stand again, at the Voice and Command of a tender Virgin. *Obediente Deo voci hominis.* God being Obedient to the Voice of Man: But with this difference, that when he obey'd *Iofue*, 'twas because it was his own Will and pleasure so to do: Whereas he obey'd *Mary*, because being subject to her, *Erat subditus illi*, 'twas his Duty to Obey her. There are five Duties, or Titles of Obligation, as Divines commonly observe,

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which all Children owe to their Parents; Of Love, of Respect, of Assistance, of Gratitude, and of Obedience. I know that several are of opinion that *Christ* our Lord, upon the account of his Sovereign Dominion over all Creatures, and consequently over his Mother too, was exempt from this last Duty, or subjection of Obedience. But I know at the same time, that others hold the contrary.* And the Reason they go upon, is, that *Christ* as Man being subject to all the Laws, and Ties of Nature, it follows by consequence, that he must also be subject to this of Obedience, and submission to Parents; Especially since this is a Law of Nature so commendable and so pious in it self on the one side, and in nothing derogatory from the supreme Excellency of *Christ* our Lord on the other. For, as *Aristotle* observes, † the paternal Dominion and Power over Children do's not take from them the least part of that Liberty, which

* *Vide Salazar in Prov. c. 8. n. 14 l. 6. & de Conc. c. 30.*

† *Arist. Pol.*

is called Lordly, and which gives them a Right to the Lordships, Titles and Estates they are born to: nor do's it make them less Noble or less Ingenuous. Wherefore *Christ* might very well remain under the Maternal Power of the Virgin, and still be that Sovereign he was: Especially since he had not as yet put on the Crown nor taken the Scepter in hand, tho' born a King. And tho' we should give for granted that the Divinity of *Christ*, had, if I may use that Term, Emancipated him from the Maternal Power of *Mary* over Him; Yet 'twould be Honour enough for the Virgin, that He obey'd Her in effect, and without being obliged thereunto, as much as if He had been truly Subject to Her: Because he did not obey her once only, or in one Circumstance, or upon one particular Occasion, as an extraordinary Thing; but constantly, at all times, and upon all Occasions, as one who lives in actual Subjection. Wherefore St. *Bonaventure* taking those words of the Gospel, *Erat subditus illi*, in their proper sense,

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doubts not to say , that Mary had God for her Subject. *Marin Deum sibi subditum habuit.* * So that, without any further doubt , we may draw from what has been hitherto said , this great and undeniable Truth, to the Glory of the Virgin; That her eminent Dignity of Mother of God is so excessively superiour to all that is purely Created, that the only Reason, why she is not also superiour to *Christ* her Son , and that in the greatest rigour of the Law , is , because he is as truly God , as he is truly her Son.

But You , in the mean time , Dear Reader, what Sentiments do you feel within your Heart , at the Rehearsal of such glorious things of this beautiful City of God ? It cannot be that you should nourish within your Breast even the smallest spark of Devotion towards Her , and that at the hearing of such Wonders you should not perceive this Fire within you breaking out insensibly *Vesuvius* like , into open flames of Love for Her. And yet I have not said half what I have to say.

§ IV.

§. Bonav. *spat. Virg. c. 8.*

§. IV.

W Herefore , Dear Reader, go on with me in Thought , and add unto what has been already said, that this Dignity so High and so Eminent , was not like a kind golden Shower voluntarily falling upon the Virgin , without any Cooperation on her side : 'Twas rather a Treasure , which she truly purchas'd by her own Industry.

For 'tis an Opinion generally receiv'd amongst the Divines , that the Bd. Virgin truly merited this august quality of Mother of God: not indeed, as we say in Schools , *de Condigno* , or in rigour of Justice ; (Because Almighty God has never promised any greater Reward to humane Merit, than that of Life everlasting) but *de Congruo* , that is , by a sort of Congruity of Reason. Because the Bd. Virgin , on her part , did effectually bring such Dispositions for the receiving of that extraordinary Dignity , that it was but very Reasonable , and congruous that Almighty God should confer it upon

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upon Her. * And therefore we may observe, that when she appear'd under that mysterious Sign, or Wonder in the Heavens, *Signum magnum apparuit in Cælo. Apoc. 12. 1.* She appear'd not only bright as the Sun, but as the Evangelist expresses it, *Clothed with the Sun, Mulier amicta sole*: to signify unto us, without doubt, that this singular and supereminent Dignity of the Divine Maternity, symbolized by the singularity of the Sun, who is alone in his Species, did so well become the Virgin, and was so exactly fitted to her Person, that it seem'd to be like a well shaped sute of Clothes fitted to the Body. It had been certainly a very great Honour and no less wonder, if the Sun had been imploy'd only to hang over this Royal Virgin's Head, by way of a Canopy: But to be shaped, as I may say, into Robes and Mantles for her own wearing, these indeed are Prodigies beyond all Imagination; it being well known that a wearing Habit, or a Sute of Clothes can never be properly such, unless

* *Suar. 3. p. 10. 1. D. 10. sect. 7. 3.*

unless it hath some sort of proportion to the Shapes, Stature, and Size, whether little or great, of the Person that is to wear it. But to set Metaphors aside, would not the Virgin be worthy of the highest esteem, if she had been exalted to the Dignity of Mother of God, purely *gratis*, and without any personal dispositions towards it, on her side, or Merit of any denomination whatsoever? Certainly she would. For, if such Honours were conferred upon a *Berfabee*, because she became the Mother of *Salomon*, tho' with so little Merit on her side, that it was on the contrary with a great deal of Demerit, and the Blemish of a shameful Crime; with how much more Reason ought the Virgin to be Honour'd, and esteem'd above all that can be expressed, Who disposed her self so worthily for this great Dignity, that she was invested with it, *de Congruo*, or, as I said before, was truly clothed with it, as with a Habit She had made Her own, by fitting her self for it? *Mulier amicta sole*. This however is certain, that the

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the Church, in her Congratulations to the Virgin, constantly repeats unto us, that *She merited to bear Iesus within her Womb. Quem meruisti portare, Resurrexit.* In whatever sense this high Encomium is taken, it certainly argues a prodigious stock of Sanctity and Merit in the Virgin. And for this Reason several Holy Writers, and Saints doubt not to call Her, sometimes a *Worthy Habitation* for the most High to dwell in, sometimes a *worthy Tabernacle*, and often a *worthy Throne of the Divinity*: Because, if she did not Merit, *de Condigno*, to receive a God within her Womb, as 'tis the more probable Opinion she did not; at least She disposed her self *de Condigno*, to receive him. * And therefore *St. Ambrose* expressly says of Her, † *Digna fuit ex qua filius Dei nasceretur.* That she, was worthy, that the Son of God should be born of her.

In the Order of Nature, Living Creatures never ingender, till they are arrived to their full growth and

* *Suar. ut supra.*

† *Ambro. l. 2. de Virg.*

and state of Perfection within their own Species. If this Rule be also observ'd in the Order of Grace, who will be able to tell us what degree, or state of Perfection was necessary in the Virgin, to conceive and bring forth a God, and that worthily? Hear how Saint Bernardin do's it in these words. *Quod femina conciperet Deum, fuit miraculum miraculorum. Oportuit itaque Virginem elevari, ut ita dicam, ad quandam quasi equalitatem divinam, per quandam infinitatem & immensitatem perfectionum, quam Creatura nunquam experta fuerat.* * That a Woman should conceive a God, was the Miracle of miracles. It was necessary therefore that the Virgin should be raised, as I may say, to a sort of an Equality with God, by a certain kind of Infinity and Immenstity of Perfections, which no Creature had ever Experienc'd before. If you will have Iron to produce Fire, must it not lay down, as it were, its own Nature of Iron in a Furnace, and borrow that of Fire? In the same manner, if a God is to be born of a Creature

* Bernardin. tom. 2. serm. 61.

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ture ; that Creature must lay aside, as it were , the Being of a Creature , and become , I do not say a God , but Divine ; if not by Nature , at least , by the most intimate and sublime Participation that is possible. So great is the Sanctity, Purity , Splendour, and Grace, which is requisite to dispose a Creature to so Divine a Work. And even when we have said all this , we only stammer like little Children , and scarce speak intelligibly : It cannot well be expected that our imperfect Words should ever give any great Light into the matter , when even our sublimest Thoughts upon this Subject are so very imperfect, and so unequal to their Objects. Wherefore I shall conclude this Chapter , by imitating the prudent Caution of those , who were sent out by the Israelites to discover the Land of Promise. These , in order to convince the Children of *Israel* of the Fertility and Happiness of that Country , and despairing to effect any thing by bare Words , brought along with them the strongest Conviction of a sample of the
best

best fruit that Country produced, a Vine-branch with a Bunch of grapes, which two men carry'd upon a Bar between them. *Tulerunt palmitem cum Vvâ quem portaverunt in Veste duo Viri.* Num. 13. 24. Behold here the best proof of what I have hitherto said, a Mother with a God her Son, in her Arms, *Palmitem cum Vvâ.* This is the only way to judge right in this matter. If you will truly know who *Mary* is, never consider her otherwise, than in the company of her Son *Iesus.*

C H A P. III.

The third motive of Devotion to the Bd. Virgin, is her Sanctity.

That double quality of Efficacious and Sweet, in which the Divine Providence glories so much, and which shines so bright in every effect of it, would not be justly attributed to it, if to the End which

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Almighty God proposes to himself with efficacious Resolution, he did not also adapt convenient Means with equal Sweetness. Wherefore Almighty God having designed that his glorious Mother should be the most beloved, and the most honoured of all pure Creatures, it is to be presumed that he has also made her the most worthy of Love, and the most deserving of Honour. By the Light of this Torch, I design, God willing, to guide you through the profound Abyss of *Mary's* great Sanctity, where 'tis now time you should be introduced. There you may freely expatiate, and give full scope to your pious Thoughts, without danger of being lost in the Labyrinth, as long as you have this Light before you, and this Thread of the Divine conduct to follow: Even tho' you should embrace the Sentiments of those Learned and zealous Writers, who speak of her Sanctity in terms so uncommon, and so sublime, that at first sight, you might apprehend them to be dangerous Precipices, either of Erroneous, or at the least, of Hyperbolic

bolical Expressions. Three principal Reasons will help us to discover this fulness of Grace, and Sanctity in the Virgin *Mary*. The End of this Grace, the Principle or Cause of it, and *Mary's* cooperation with it. But before I proceed any further, I cannot but observe a notable difference between *Mary*, and other Saints upon this subject. Upon other Saints Grace is said to descend, *sicut stillicidia stillantia super Terram*, like gentle drops of Dew falling upon the Earth; But upon *Mary* it comes showering down in whole Clouds, *Sicut pluvia in Vellus*, as Rain falling with violence upon fleeces of Wool. Where again I take notice, how properly *Mary's* receiving this superabundance of Grace, is compared to the Wool's imbibing of Water, without letting the least drop of it run off, as the Earth is often apt to do: since no part of the Grace which *Mary* ever received, lay idle in Her, or had not all the Effect for which it was given; which would be a Rashness to say of any other Saint whatsoever.

§. II.

IN the first place therefore, this fulness of Grace must be gathered from the End of it ; since it properly belongs to Almighty God to distribute his Gifts , and Favours in proportion to the Employments he designs to give. For this Reason , he conferr'd so many singular Privileges upon St. *John Baptist* , because he was to be his Precursor , upon St. *Peter* , as Prince of the Apostles, and Head of the Church , upon St. *Paul* , as the chief Preacher of the Gospel and Propagator of the Christian Faith. And for this same Reason , 'twas also said unto *Moyse* : *Auferam de spiritu tuo, & tradam eis.* Num : II. 17. I will take of thy Spirit , and distribute it amongst them ; meaning those seventy Elders who were to succeed him in the Government of the People , or rather to share that burden with him. For , since Almighty God had divided that Office amongst them , it was but Reasonable he should also communicate unto them proportionable

able helps, and graces to discharge the Obligations of it. Now, if you please, cast an Eye back upon what has been said a little before of the Excellencies, and high Prerogatives which the Dignity of Mother of God carries along with it; and how it enters into an Order superiour to all that is purely Created, that is, into the Order of Hypostatical Union; *et suâ Operatione fines Divinitatis propinquius attingit*; * and by its Operation approaches the nearest to the Divinity; and you will quickly perceive that whatever Idea you frame unto your self of the grace of the Virgin Mary, tho' never so great, 'twill still fall short of the Truth, because it can never come up to the height of the Employment, which God had designed her for.

The height of an Obelisk being once known, any one that is skilful in Architecture will easily determine, by certain Rules of Proportion, the just Dimensions of the Pedestal upon which it must stand. But Oh! who can tell the prodigious

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* S. Thom. q. cit.

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gious height of the Divine Maternity conferr'd upon *Mary* ! If this is in a manner infinite , what excess of Sanctity will be requisite to make that *Basis* , which shall be able to support it without yielding under the weight of it ? Were I to draw out the Plan of a *Basis* fit for that *Angel* in the *Apocalypse* to rest on, who , *Colossus* like , stood with one foot upon the Circumference of the Earth , and with the other upon the surface of the Sea , no question but our *Alpes* and our *Appenins* would be too low , for a structure of that Nature. And shall I presume to raise a *Basis* to that great *Virgin Mother* , who could encompass within her Womb, the Creator of both Earth and Sea ? Far be from me so great a Presumption. However not to be wanting to my Endeavours , in what I have promised , we will further observe , that in that unmeasurable stock of Sanctity, which was communicated unto *Mary* , the dispensing Providence of Almighty God had two special Regards , the one to us , the other to *Christ* : Because at one and the same

same time he was preparing a Mother for *Christ*, and for us.

And for as much as concerns us, the Virgin was not only to embrace two Nations, as *Rebecca* did, to whom the Angel told as a great Honour, that she should be the Mother of two Numerous People, *Dua gentes sunt in Vtero tuo.* Gen. 25. 23. But she was to carry in her Womb the whole Number of the Elect. *Venter tuus sicut Acer-vus Triticæ vallatus Lilijs.* Cant. 7. 2. Thy Womb is like unto a Heap of Wheat encompassed with Lillies. And consequently as the true Mother of the Living, and Repairer of the losses caused by *Eve*, (who in effect rather proved the Mother of the Dead) it was fitting she should enjoy a certain sort of Preeminence of Chief and Head of them all, not unlike unto that which, in the true and proper sense, belongs indeed only to *Christ*. As therefore the Grace of *Christ*, being a Grace peculiarly belonging to him as Head of all the Elect, was to be, not indeed infinite (because no such can be conferr'd) but immense beyond

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yond Expression; so it was also convenient, that the grace of *Mary* for a like, tho' not equal Reason, should be something of the same stamp. The Virgin in quality of Mother of the Elect, partakes of the same Dignity of being their Head with *Christ*, as we said before: and tho' this ought to be understood in a Degree far inferiour to *Christ*, yet because it is with the perfectest Resemblance with him that can be conceived in a pure Creature, therefore 'twas but just, that God should Enrich her with Graces proportionable to her Dignity; which he did by assembling together, and reuniting in that one Heart of *Mary*, all those Endowments, Qualifications, and Perfections, which were distributed in smaller Portions amongst all the other Saints; just as when he made the Sea, he commanded all the Waters and Rivers, which before were dispersed over all the Earth, to meet together in one place, *Congregentur aqua in unum locum.* Gen. i. and that place he call'd the Sea. And truly the Heart of *Mary* may justly be call'd a Sea, which
never

never runs over, tho' never so full,
et Mare non redundat. Eccl. I. 7.
 Because all those Qualities and Per-
 fections assembled together in that
 One Heart, do not exceed the
 Depth and Capacity of their pro-
 per Channel, I mean of the Office
 and Dignity which She so worthily
 sustains.

As to the other Regard, which
 we said Almighty God had unto
Christ, when he was preparing the
 Virgin to be his Mother; 'twas cer-
 tainly very fitting that this Mother
 should bear the most perfect Re-
 semblance with him in all things,
 and approach to him in every re-
 spect, as near as might be consistent
 with the nature of a pure Creature,
 which we must always allow to be
 limited. *Aristotle* advises all Law-givers
 to have a very special Care and at-
 tention, for the government and Edu-
 cation of the Women: because, says
 he, when they become Mothers, they
 become one half of their Children.

*Ordinatum politiam non modicum oportet
 attendere ad Mulieres, imò valde mul-
 tum, quia dimidium filiorum Mater est.* *

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* *Aristo. Polit. c. 3.*

If this be so Essential a part of good government, in a well order'd Republick, who will dare to say that the sovereign Law-giver of all the World, had not a most particular attention in modelling of the Virgin? since in making her, he made nothing less than a Mother to the Eternal Word himself? so that, if that Divine Son she afterwards brought forth to the World, were not uncapable of division into parts, in that respect in which he is every way Infinite, She might justly be said to be the half of him, *Dimidium filij*. Mothers are, as it were, living Moulds of their Children: And, as it is a very rare case, that the Children do not take from the Mother the exterior features of the Face, so it is much a rarer case, that the Mother does not communicate unto her Children, the more interior Resemblance of her Humour, Inclinations, Habits, and whole Behaviour.

Imagine now with your self, that the Virgin had been chosen by Almighty God, not to be the Mother of *Iesus*, but only to be his Nurse,
and

and to give him suck. What Care, what Attention, what Caution could have been too great, in the Choice of such a Nurse? When the question is to give a Nurse to the new-born Prince, and Heir apparent to the Crown, how many Conferences are held at Court upon this subject? How many Physicians called, to consult about the most proper Person to be preferr'd to an Office of that importance? How many Inquiries are made all over the Kingdom? How many Informations are taken of her Health, of her Milk, of her Temper, and of all her other qualities good or bad? And all too little, as *Plato* assures us, when he praises so much the prudent conduct and Caution of the *Persians* in this point, who had made it a Law, that no body should be employ'd in that Office of so much concern for the publick Good, but a Princess of the noblest Blood, and greatest Quality of the Kingdom. And indeed with good Reason; For, who does not know that from the Nurse's Breasts, as from two secret Channels, the Virtues and Vices, both Natural

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Natural and Moral of the Person that gives suck, may pass as easily into the Child, as the Milk it self. Thus the Roman Histories report their *Tiberius* to have been a Drunkard, because his Nurse was so much addicted to Wine, that she would often mingle it with the Milk she gave him. And thus they represent their *Caligula*, as a Monster of Cruelty, because she that gave him suck, was often wont to present him her Breasts all imbrued with blood; as if she were breeding up, not an Emperour for the Defence and preservation of *Rome*, but a Tiger to tear it in pieces. I say therefore, that if the *Virgin Mary* had been deputed only once in her Life, to apply her Virginal Breasts to the sacred Lips of the Divine Infant *Iesus*, in order to suckle him, not as a Mother, but barely as an ordinary Nurse; This alone had been Reason sufficient for the Divine Providence to have a most particular Care in fitting her out, for so great a Charge. What shall we say then, when She alone was design'd by Providence, to furnish out
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of her own most pure Substance, the first materials for the formation of that Divine Body; and that she alone was to give the Infant God his first natural food, by holding him to her Breasts, not once only, but Hundreds and Hundreds of times?

Nor will it be to the purpose to tell me here, that 'twould be but a vain and groundless apprehension, to imagine that the Habits or Inclinations less Regular of the Mother could anywise affect the Sanctity of *Jesus*, altogether incapable of contracting any thing less perfect. For, tho' in effect this be truly so, yet this does not happen in a connatural way, but meerly by Accident, and by a particular Dispensation from the usual course of Nature; Whereas all the World knows, that in humane Affairs and when proper measures are to be taken for the success of any business, Prudence requires that we should chiefly consider what falls out according to the natural Course of second Causes, and not what may possibly happen by Accident, or in any other Hypo-

thesis which might be made. We know, for example, that Lead cannot transmit the smallest Atome of its base Allay into a Diamond; and yet what Jeweller will ever chuse to set a Diamond in Lead? Had you been the Jeweller employ'd to set that Matchless Pearl, the wonder of the World, which *Philip III.* is said to have wore upon the hilt of his Sword, would not you have chosen for that work the richest and finest Enamel that could be found? Doubtless you would. For tho' a Pearl of that exorbitant size be more than rich enough of it self, yet it is certain that there is a mutual, tho' perchance not an equal setting off of one another between the Pearl and the Enamel. So in some respect, a certain proportion of a like, tho' certainly not an Equal Sanctity, was intended between *Christ*, and his Bd. Mother. Because if *Christ*, that truly unparalleled and matchless Pearl, was an infinite Honour, and Ornament to his Virgin Mother; so his Mother, that Beautiful and truly Matchless Enamel, was, not indeed an infi-

nite,

nite, but a most superlative Honour and Ornament to *Christ* her Son. *Gloria filiorum Patres eorum.* Prov. 17. 6. tho' we shall always allow that *Christ* stood in no need of such an Honour, or such an Ornament.

§. III.

THe second Reason from whence we must gather this Fulness of Grace in the Virgin *Mary*, is the Principle of it, or the Origine from whence it was derived. And this is no other than the Love which *Christ* himself had for Her: A Love, unto which the Sanctity of *Mary* was most exactly Corresponding: since in God, it is one and the same thing to love a Person, and by that very Love to communicate unto the same Person wherewithal to be worthy of his Love. Now, to give you a perfect Idea of this Love of *Christ* towards the Virgin, 'twould be sufficient to refresh you the memory of what has been already said, that this Divine Sun of Charity looks upon this beautiful Moon alone, with a more favour-

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able Eye, than upon all the other Stars together, tho' never so bright and so numerous. *Deus plus amat solam Virginem quàm reliquos Sanctos omnes*; and, that like a prudent Merchant, who knows the true value of things, when he laid down upon the Cross, the whole price of his most pretious Blood, he had more in View the purchasing of that Only Pearl, than the whole Multitude of the other inferiour Jewels. But tho' this were sufficient, yet if I have already set this lovely Picture before your Eyes, for you to admire at your leisure, why may not I endeavour to place it still in a better light, and more to the advantage, not of the Original, which can receive no addition of Beauty from my Industry, but of your self, who by this means may be able to frame a better Judgment of it; by considering more distinctly the many Titles of filial Piety whereby *Christ* was obliged in Duty to love his Mother? First therefore, we will consider those Titles which obliged him in general as a Son; and then those which obliged him

him more individually as such a Son.

The greatest Tie, or Obligation that can be found in Nature, is that which all Effects have to their Causes. That noble River, for example, which is continually running downwards with so much precipitation, if it had sense to know its Obligations to its Fountain-head, and could express them, how often would it stop in the midst of its rapid Course, to look back, as I may say, and salute that never failing Spring, which is always supplying it with new silver streams? In the same manner, the Light it self by which we see, that beautiful Daughter of a more beautiful Father, were it sensible of the favour of so bright a Being, it continually receives from the Sun, how could it forbear to return upon him again its brightest Rays, at every hour of the day, by way of homage and acknowledgment? If therefore this Obligation, this Tie, this Dependence is so great in all natural Effects, upon account of the Being they receive from their Causes, it must certainly be far greater in those Effects which receive a

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perfecter Being. Whence it follows that the Obligation of a Child to his Parents can have no limits, because he can never return Thanks equal to the Benefit of Life, he hath receiv'd from them. *Dijs & Parentibus*, says the Philosopher, and he is highly commended for it by St. Thomas, *parentem gratiam referre non possumus*. To God and our Parents we can never render an Equivalent, at least in this Life: so great is the Debt which every man Contracts with those, who have given him the Being he enjoys of a Rational Creature. And this generical Tie which binds all Children so straitly to their Parents, seems to have been stronger still upon *Christ*, than upon any other, for two Reasons. The first, because the Obligation of *Christ* was not divided between Father and Mother, as it is in all other Children, who are conceiv'd of Woman, by the help of Man, and therefore may be compared to the Flowers of a Garden, which owe their Being partly to the Soil that produc'd them, and partly to him that cultivated that Soil. Whereas *Christ* was truly

Flos

Flos campi, The Flower of the Field, conceiv'd and born of *Mary* alone, that pure and Virgin Earth, never touch'd by any Mortal. To *Mary* alone he ow'd his natural Being upon Earth : and this is one true sense amongst the many others, in which he could so often, and so justly call her his Only One. The second Reason why *Christ* may be said to have greater Obligations to *Mary*, than other Children have to their Parents, is, because *Mary* not only gave him the first and best of Gifts, that is, his very Being : But she gave it him in the best and perfectest manner possible, to wit, by Love. Other Mothers know nothing of their Children before they bear them, and become their Mothers ; consequently, as before they bear their Children, they cannot possibly love them as such in particular, so they cannot chuse them in particular, or single them out, with any special Affection, from amongst that infinite number of other Children, which might as well be the fruit of their Womb, as those they are actually Mothers of. And for this Reason, the

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the Benefit they bestow upon some, rather than upon others, is much diminish'd ; because they bestow it more by Chance, than by Choice. I am certainly much beholden to the kind Heavens, which, whilst I am fast asleep, are carefully watching over me with as many Eyes, as there are Stars sparkling in the Firmament. But how much greater would my Obligations be, if those very Eyes which are truly open for my Benefit, should so distinguish me from the rest of Mortals, as if I alone were the only Object of their Attention ? In *Mary* this is all true to a tittle. She did not conceive this Divine Son of hers, without preferring him before all others. On the contrary, to him alone, as to a Heavenly Dew, this Virginal Shell voluntarily open'd her Chast Womb, which otherwise remain'd eternally closed up with the Seal of a Vow, to the whole Ocean of all other possible Creatures. And this was so pleasing to *Christ*, that to the End she might never say to him, as all other Mothers may truly say to their Children, *Nescio qualiter in utero meo*

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apparuit. 2. Mach. 7. 22. I know not how you appear'd within my Womb, He would not descend into her Virginal Womb, till she had first given her exprefs Consent ; *Noluit carnem sumere ex ea, nisi dante ipsâ.* * That so He might owe himself more to the Heart of *Mary*, than to her Womb, tho' he was certainly the true fruit of it. And when I say, *owe himself*, I say it in the most rigorous signification those words can be taken in; For it is a singular Prerogative of the Virgin's, that of all pure Creatures, she alone can be said with Truth, to have put God himself in her Debt, *Obnoxium habet sibi omnium fœneratorem.* † Almighty God, 'tis true, makes himself a Debtor to other Saints. But how? By promise only. For, as St. *Augustin* says, *Debitorem se facit, non accipiendo sed promittendo.* * He makes himself their Debtor, not by receiving any thing from them, but by promising something unto them. But to the Virgin *Mary* he truly became a Debtor, by

* *Guliel in Cant.*

† *Method. Ora. de Purif.*

* *August. in Psalm. 83.*

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by borrowing of her, what he had not before, his Humanity. And therefore she is the only Person, to whom the Apostle could not say *Quis prior dedit illi, & retribuetur ei.* Rom. II. 35. *Who has given unto him first, and he shall be recompensed.* For if he should put that question to her, she might freely Answer: I my self, before he had any humane Will, gave him the natural Being he now enjoys, by making him Man: Nor did I give it him only, but I even Anticipated the time of it, and hasten'd his coming into the World, with my Sighs and Prayers.

Tell me now, Dear Reader, if you can, before you pass any further, what grateful Acknowledgments were return'd by such a Son, to such a Mother. If to a glass of Water given him upon Earth, he has promised whole Torrents of Everlasting Joys in Heaven, what Oceans of graces has he not shower'd down upon Her, who gave him the very Blood in her Veins? first by converting it into flesh for him, when she conceiv'd him, a tender Infant, and afterwards into Milk

Milk for his Nourishment, when she Nursed him at her own Breasts? And if *Iesus* gave himself even to those who took his Life from him, as ungrateful Man did ; what must he have given to Her , who gave him that very Life ? Since therefore it cannot be question'd, but *Iesus* had a Heart infinitely grateful, it must be own'd that what he has given to *Mary*, in Exchange for what he has receiv'd from Her , is ineffable, and beyond the force of humane Eloquence to express. *Ineffabilis Sanctificationis gratia quantum in corpore Virginis valuerit , illi soli notum est*, says St. Augustin , *qui de ejus natura naturam suscepit.* * What wonderful Effects were wrought by the ineffable grace of Sanctification in the Body of the Virgin (when the Word was made flesh therein) is only known to him , who borrowed his humane Nature from Hers.

The Sum of that Dowry which the Divine Word brought with him, when he Espoused the Virgin , is only known to him that brought it.

And

* *Aug. serm. de Assum.*

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And this was the only occasion, in which God could ever exercise the rare Virtue of Gratitude: 'twas but fitting therefore that he should exercise it like a God, by employing in it the whole strength of his All-powerful Arm; since the question was to satisfy a Debt so excessive, that if, when he became the Son of *Mary*, he had not been as truly God, as he was made truly Man, he would not have had in all his Treasures, a Capital sufficient to discharge it. Amongst Men this kind of gratitude of Children towards their Parents is scarce Understood, at least 'tis seldom esteem'd as it ought to be, tho' certainly nothing can be more Just. The Reason is, because they are little accustomed to see any remarkable examples of it. Parents, commonly speaking, Love their Children more than they are beloved by them: And tho' Love be said to be a Fire, yet in this Case, it does not follow the Nature of Fire, by ascending, as it should do, from Children to Parents, but on the Contrary, it descends from Parents to Children.

But

But that most pure Love which *Christ* bore unto his Virgin Mother, like Fire in its proper Sphere, did not contract any of those drossy and clogging Qualities, which otherwise it borrows from our Earthly Substance, whilst here below. And therefore *Christ*, contrary to all other Children, incomparably more Loving than beloved, was resolved to form unto himself a Mother, according to his own Heart, endowed with Sanctity to such an Eminent degree, that as St. *Anselm* expresses it, *A greater, under God, cannot be conceiv'd. Quâ nequeat major intelligi sub Deo.* * And as this was his Intention, so he both knew how to effect it, and had Power equal to his Knowledge.

If an Excellent Painter were to draw out for himself a Spouse, such as he would have Her; and were to have for the Original, just such an one as he could draw a Copy of upon Cloth: Do you think he would spare any pains, any Industry, any Cost, to make her as beautiful and as fair, as Passion and

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Fancy

* *S. Anselm. de Excell. Virg.*

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Fancy could suggest ? How would he study all the greatest Masters of that Art, your Guido Reni's, your Raphaels, Angelo's, your Tizians ? What charming Features would not he borrow from one ? What Air, what Majesty from another ? What liveliness of Action from a third ? I believe this fond Painter would equally find fault with Nature, and with Art: With Nature, for not furnishing Colours lively enough for his noble Ideas; and with Art, for not supplying Ideas noble enough for the Vehemency of his Passion. If humane things could bear any proportion, or similitude with what is purely Divine, we might imagine our Case to be something like this. And what Reason can there be to think that the Divine Word should act otherwise ? I mean, that he alone should have it in his power, to draw out, as I may say, to his own liking, that Virgin who was to be not only his Spouse, but also his Mother, and should not have done it ? Was Power perchance wanting to the All-powerful, Wisdom to the All-wise, or Gratitude

to

to the Fountain of all Love? I am sure this was not his meaning, when he left written of Himself in the Book of Proverbs, *Sapientia edificavit sibi domum.* Prov. 9. 1. *Wisdom hath built unto it self a house.* Have you ever observ'd the Expression? The Divine Word did not hire a House, as I may say, already finish'd and furnish'd, to lodge in for a while; by fitting out any Ordinary Person, for that purpose of being his Mother: But he made One himself: Nor did he make it, as we say, at any fashion, but he built it; that is, he made it, not as he made all other Created Things, only with a Word speaking, and as it were, without any particular Application, or Attention to what he was doing, *Ipse dixit, & facta sunt*; but he made it with Design, with Application, with Architecture, with Rule. *Edificavit.* He built it, & *edificavit sibi*; And he built it for himself; that is, he did not build it for the use of any other Person, but purely for his own, and that it might be a House fit for a God to dwell in. I say, a

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House, *Domum*. Because he did not design it for a Temple, to reside in with the Grandeur and Majesty of a God, but for a House, for his private and familiar Habitation, for his Retirement, for his Repose. *Sapientia adificavit sibi Domum*. This being supposed, can we think that being the Eternal Wisdom it self, he had not all the Attention imaginable to raise this mystical Building, and to furnish it with all those Perfections, Prerogatives, and Advantages which could make it most agreeable to him, and most proper for his own Use? Let us therefore conclude this matter thus. He that desires to take a faithful Account of all those Immense Treasures of Grace, which *Christ* has deposited in the Heart of *Mary*, let him sum up every particular Article, by this golden Rule of Proportion; of a God enriching his own Mother: and enriching Her first, to comply with his infinite Love towards her; and secondly to discharge a Debt, he had contracted with her, the greatest and the only one he could ever contract with
any

any of his Creatures. I know that the great King *Salomon*, of the richest Prince that ever was, never began to be poor, but when he began to Love: But of Thee, great King of Glory, what shall I say? I will not say that Thou wer't the least impoverish'd, by discharging those Debts unto *Mary*, which Thy Love alone had contracted. Yet this I will say, that if Thou wer't not impoverish'd, 'twas not because Thou wer't sparing of Thy Liberality towards her, but because Thou wer't so much greater than *Salomon*, not only in Wisdom, but also in Riches. *Ecce plus quàm Salomon hic*. And indeed what wonder Thou wer't not the poorer for giving, since the Treasures that come from Thy liberal hands, are not the Treasures of an Exchequer, as *Salomon's* were, but of a Mine, and a Mine that can never be exhausted?

§. IV.

FOR the third Reason, or Cause of this extraordinary fulness of Grace in the Virgin *Mary*, let us, if

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you please, carry our Thoughts and our Eyes a little higher above this *Babylon* of Misery, where we are still sighing as Exiles from our heavenly Country, and fix them upon the great Sanctity of that mystical *Ierusalem*, and holy City of God, the glorious Virgin; where we shall see what Industry she used on her side, to improve to the best advantage, that prodigious stock of Grace, which was given her at first to Traffick withall; that we may also admire and acknowledge, that if many other holy Souls have heap'd up great Treasures of Grace, *Multa filia congregaverunt divitias*, *Mary* has certainly surpassed them all, *Supergressa est universas*. Prov. 31. 29. But before we can Understand the Immenseness of these multiply'd Improvements, and what an inconceivable Sum they grew to at last, we must first know what was the Principal Sum, put in at first by way of a Capital, or Fund answerable to such vast Incomes.

I hold for a certain Truth, that the Virgin, in the first instant of her Conception, had more Grace

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conferr'd upon her, than any Saint upon Earth, or Seraphim in Heaven had, at the end of the Time which was given them to Merit in. This, I think, cannot be denied without a manifest Injury to the Virgin; partly because 'tis an Opinion in which all Divines agree: * and partly, because holy Writ it self seems to give no small grounds to believe it, since the Royal Prophet says, *Fundamenta ejus in Montibus Sanctis. Diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia Tabernacula Iacob.* Psam. 86. Observe those sublime Spirits and Princes of the Empyreal, the Angels: See how they rise like lofty Mountains, and tower it even above the Celestial Spheres. On the Tops of those very Mountains, are laid the Foundations of this stately Edifice, the Virgin Mary; because she begins where others End. And Almighty God is more delighted with the Gates only of this Noble and Beautiful *Sion*, that is, the very first Beginnings of it, than with all the richest Tabernacles of *Iacob*, in their greatest splendour and perfection.

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* Vide *Suar.* 3. p. 10. 2. D. 4. S. 1.

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If you wonder at this , He himself takes off the Wonder, by adding a greater wonder to it, when he tells you that the Reason of all this was, because he himself was made Man within her Womb, *Homo natus est in ea*. And therefore 'twas but just and reasonable that he should lay the Foundations of her Sanctity and Greatness, with all the Magnificence that was futable to so great a King as he was , for whom alone that noble Structure was raised.

When *Salomon* built his famous Temple, he did not throw into the Foundations of it, all sorts of Stones promiscuously and without choice, as others commonly do ; But he order'd that nothing should be employed in those Foundations, but large Stones , Stones of great price and value ; *Præcepitque Rex ut tollerent lapides grandes , lapides pretiosos in fundamentum Templi.* 3. Reg. 5. 17. But what Prodigality was this, to bury such rich Materials under ground, and as one would think, to so little purpose? Did this great Prince , who in all other things was so excessively Wiser than

than the rest of Mankind, pretend perchance to Vie with Nature , which seems to affect to hide the most pretious Metals in the bowels of the Earth , and the choicest Pearls in the bottom of the Sea ? To imagine any such thing , would look more like a Jest , than any serious Discourse. For my part, if I did not know , that the true Architect of this stately Temple was in reality, no other than God himself , I should be much put to it , to understand how the Profuseness of those Foundations should not derogate as much from the Praise due to the Workmanship of the Temple, as the luster of its golden Walls , and the Magnificence of the rest of the Building had merited the Universal applause and admiration of all the World. In a word , I should not be able to reconcile so much Prodigality in the hidden Treasure of the Foundations , with so much Wisdom and Design in the whole Structure. But there was , Mystery in it. And, if I am not mistaken , it was this. That ancient material Temple was but a Figure and a Type
of

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of another, not inanimate, but Living Temple, in which the King of Glory was to take up his Habitation in a Corporal manner, for the space of nine Months, as in a Palace in which he took his greatest Delight. 'Twas a figure of the Virgin *Mary*. Wherefore to give us a sensible proof of the Immenseness of that fundamental Grace, if I may so call it, which, contrary to the Ordinary course of Providence, she was to receive in her Conception, for the Ground-work of all her future Sanctity, Almighty God ordain'd that the Foundation of *Salomon's* Temple, which was but an Emblem of *Mary*, should be laid, contrary also to the common practice on these Occasions, with the richest Materials that could be found. And thus we see how that Expence which otherwise might seem useless, could not be taxed with Prodigality, which was laid out upon so noble a Design, as to represent the Sanctity of the Virgin *Mary*, even in her first Beginnings.

But, whatsoever I may say of that Immense Capital of Grace,
which

which *Mary* at first received, and afterwards improved with so much Industry, 'twill be impossible for me to make you comprehend the inestimable value of it, unless I divide it into smaller Portions, and count it out, as I may say, before you; it being the property of all Excessive Sums, never to appear so great in the Heap, as when they are told out at leisure, and piece by piece. Let us therefore argue thus.

'Tis a Truth beyond all Dispute, that the whole Multitude of the Angels in Heaven do's so far exceed all that we can possibly imagine, that our Arithmetick has not figures enough to express the Number of them. *Numquid est Numerus militum ejus?* Job. 25. 3. Can any one, says Holy Job, reckon up the Number of his Souldiers? O! how would you be deceiv'd, if you should imagine you could call down those Heavenly Champions one by one, to pass, as 'twere, in a Review before you, within the narrow compass of your limited Understanding! The great *Arcopagite*, who doubtless was

was well informed in the matter, (his Master, the great S. Paul, having been an Eye witness of what he had taught him) tells us that not only the Souldiers, but even the entire Armies of those Bd. Spirits, which are drawn up, as I may say, under every different Banner, are of a Number absolutely imperceptible to the Infirmary of our humane Understandings. *Sunt beati Exercitus supernarum mentium, infirmarum nostrarum mentium numerum superexcedentes.* Words so powerful, that they moved St. Thomas * to teach us that the Angelical Substances surpass in number, all the Corporeal Substances, with as much Excess, as the Superiour among the Corporeal Substances, which are the Heavens, surpass the Inferiour ones in bulk of Body: which is an Excess beyond all Proportion. So that, according to this way of reckoning, we must suppose the Angels to be more in number, than all the Stars in the Firmament, all the Sands of the Sea, and all the Atoms of the Air; †

only

* S. Thom. 3. p. q. 90. art. ult.

† Vide Suar. l. 1. de Angel. c. 11. n. 13.

only with this difference ; that tho' they are so very numerous, yet they are not a confus'd Multitude like the Sands , or the Atoms, but with Order equal to their Numbers , they gradually succeed and proportionably exceed each other in perfection of Nature : Just as in Numbers , (says the Angelical Doctor) the Second exceeds the First, the Third exceeds the Second , and the Fourth exceeds the Third; and thus they are successively distinguish'd one from the other , by the advantage of some greater Perfection. Moreover, to the Gifts of Nature in Angels are also proportioned the Gifts and Indowments of Grace. So that amongst those happy Spirits, whosoever is endow'd with greater Perfections in the Order of Nature , is also enriched with greater Graces in the Order above Nature. But to what End, you'll say , is all this Discourse ? Have patience a while , and if I mistake not , you will see that I have done like the Faulcon , who spends some time indeed in Wheeling about , but loses none ; be-

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cause by flying round and round, he only gathers so much more strength to fall upon his Prey. If the Angels, as we have said, are without number, and every one is still more perfect in Nature, than the other; and if again, as much as one is perfecter than the other in Nature, so he is also proportionably richer in Grace; it necessarily follows, that whatever small degree of Grace you allow to the lowest Angel, there must be corresponding to it an incredible quantity of Grace in the highest. So that St. Michael, who, according to the more common Opinion, is the Prince and Head of them all, must possess at least as many degrees of Grace, as there are Angels under him, and inferior to him in natural Perfection; that is to say, Innumerable. Now, if to the lowest Angel you allow, not one degree only of Grace, but Thousands and Thousands, as it is but very reasonable, considering the great natural Perfections of any Angel whatsoever; to what a prodigious height must that Grace increase, which according to the

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Proportion we have spoken of, must be allowed to that highest Angel, who is the Captain, and Leader of all that Glorious Militia? Just as it falls out in the Division of the Degrees upon Circles, which Astronomers make use of for their Astronomical Observations. That Degree for example, which upon the surface of our Earthly Globe, in a *Circulus maximus*, does not take up above threescore Miles at most; if you transport it into a *Circulus maximus* of the highest Heaven, will take in a far greater compass, than the strongest Imagination is able to embrace. Behold I am now come to the point I was aiming at; and tho' I have taken my Argument a little at a distance, yet I hope at the winding up of this Discourse, you will find I have made good what I had promised, which was to shew you the Immenseness of the Virgin Mary's first Capital Sum of Grace. Know therefore, and let this suffice, that Her first Grace was greater, than the last, or finishing Grace of the highest of all the Angels; and by this you

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may easily guess whether it was a plentiful Grace or not. But I would not advise you to descend any further to particulars; or ask me by how much it did surpass it; for I am not ashamed to own that I cannot Answer you. If you will know it, you must ask it of Him that bestowed it; since no body but himself can tell, and he alone keeps an Account of it. But here, Methinks, whilst I flatter my self that I am already advanced a great part of my way, I find I am only at the setting out. Follow me however, Dear Reader, in Thought, whilst I resume the Thread of my Discourse, and be not tired; for I design to lead you into a bottomless Sea; where, if after all we can do no better, we will resolve to sink together, and sweetly lose our selves in an Ocean of Wonders, in order to follow; as near as may be, the Sanctity of Mary; and keep at least within sight of it, if we cannot hope to come up to it.

This first and unspeakable Grace in the Virgin Mary constantly went on redoubling in her ever after,
from

from the first moment she received it, to her dying Breath. This I might suppose as an undoubted Truth; for, if this way of redoubling of Grace was common to all the Angels, for that short space of Time, in which they were Viators, that is, in a way or capacity of Meriting, who can question but it was much more considerable in Mary, the Queen of Angels? *Albertus Magnus* look'd upon it as a sort of a first Principle, and a self-evident Truth, that the Graces of all the Saints in Heaven were conferr'd upon the Virgin Mary, in a more perfect manner, than upon all the rest together: and consequently that if any Priviledge or Favour could be question'd in Mary, that Favour or that Priviledge, could not be granted to any other Saint, or Angel inferiour to Her. *Principium ex terminis per se notum, Virgini perfectius collatas omnium Sanctorum gratias.* *

However, because our whole Discourse is grounded upon this continual Redoubling of Grace in the Virgin, as upon its Basis, I am

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* *Alb. l. de B. M. c. 69. 70. 71.*

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willing not to presuppose it, but to prove it. It cannot be questioned, but the Virgin was moved with most extraordinary speed, to make daily and hourly new purchases of Grace; since, being as she was, totally free from the *Fomes peccati*, or Root of Sin, she was moved in her Progress to Sanctity, without Opposition or Obstacle by the way. I will explain my self, with a similitude as clear as the Light of the Sun; for it shall be from that very Light that I will borrow it. Have you ever observed with what incredible swiftness this Light carries it self to the remotest Confines of the Hemisphere? A Canon bullet, tho' carried upon the Wings of Fire, does not fly any faster in the space of one Minute, than three Miles at the most: and this Trial has been often made by the most expert Canoneers. So that, by this account, tho' it should always go on with equal Speed, and never slacken by the way, yet in an Hour's time 'twould only make a Hundred and fourscore Miles. Light, on the contrary, in less than the twink-

ling of an Eye, not only goes from one side of the Horizon to the other, but could Cross over, with as much ease, all those nine Hundred and Thirty four Millions of Miles, which we suppose to ly between the two Poles. Whence proceeds this extreme Swiftneſs in Light, contrary to what we ſee in all other things that are moved, only from having no Enemy to encounter by the way? In all that vaſt Tract of the *Ætherial* Regions, it meets with nothing to oppoſe its paſſage, and therefore in a Moment it comes to the Term of its Motion; becauſe it goes without Oppoſition. And this was the difference between the Virgin's way of Acting, and that which is proper to the reſt of Mankind. Amongſt men, tho' ſome perchance may be found who advance by great ſteps in the way of Sanctity and Perfection, nay who even run, and fly too, if you pleaſe; yet they never advance with perfect ſpeed; becauſe in their progreſs, or Courſe, or even Flight, they ſtill meet with ſome Oppoſition either more
or

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or less, and something of a Clog which retards their Motion: They have within them the *Fomes Peccati*, which is that Inclination or Bent, which every Man has from his own corrupted Nature, not to God, the true Center of his Soul, but to himself and to Sin. In the Virgin there was no such Thing; for she, from the very first instant of her Conception, being intirely free from Sin, and all Inclination to Sin, never met with the least Resistance, or Obstacle of any kind, which could stop her, even for a moment in her happy and speedy Career. And therefore, as in the Order of Grace, she was the first-born from the Voice of the Divine Word, *Primogenita ex Ore Altissimi*, no otherwise than Light, in the Order of Nature, was the first Effect of the same powerful Voice; so, in this swiftness of Motion and Operation, she perfectly resembled the Nature of Light, by propagating her Merit as far as it could go, not by succession of steps and degrees, but in the instant. Behold here whereon is grounded that
noble

noble Sentiment which the Devout Clients of the Virgin have conceived of Her, when they say that at every Act of her Life, she redoubled her Grace. 'Tis upon this. On the one side, The Habit of Virtue accompanied with an actual Grace proportionable to it, is (to speak in School terms) an adequate Principle, or a total sufficiency for the producing of an Act of equal Intensity with the Habit in itself. On the other side, The Virgin never meeting with any hinderance, always acted to the utmost of her power, nor did she ever let any of those precious Talents be buried in Idleness, even for the least moment, which God was continually supplying her with all, in order to increase her Stock. From this joyn't-Principle, of which the first part is not denied by any, and the second has been clearly proved, it follows that with the Second Act, the Virgin doubled the Merit of the first, and making the Habit now doubly intense, disposed her self to double with her third Act, the Merit of her Second.

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cond. I perceive already that this way of arguing is not a Light for every Eye to gaze on. But what then ? My very not being Understood will in some manner help to explain my meaning. He that does not comprehend this sort of progressive Calculation, let him rejoyce that the Grandures of *Mary* are such, that they surpass his Imagination, and even confound his Understanding. And let him employ his time in loving and admiring that, which at present he does not Understand, that he may come one day to Understand what he is now contented to love and admire.

However, to leave no means untried, I'll see if by similitudes and sensible examples, I cannot give you something of a plain & intelligible Notion of this prodigious Multiplication. A skilful Jockey having with much Industry and pains rear'd up a fine young Horse for the Saddle, and joyn'd in him all those perfections of Art, which a Horse of noble breed is capable of, exposed him to sale. At the very first appearance of this sprightly

ly Nag, a Gentleman was so taken with him, that he was resolved to have him at any rate; and therefore without many words, he offer'd a blank signed for the Jockey to write down what price he pleased. Sir, says the Jockey, I esteem this Horse as much as *Alexander* did his *Bucephalus*, and your whole Estate perchance will not suffice to pay me the value of him. However, if you think fitting, we will agree thus. The Horse and Equipage shall be yours for Nothing; and you shall only pay me for the Nails in his shoes. But you shall pay them so, that for the first Nail you shall only give me one *Julio*, for the second two *Julios*, for the third four, for the fourth Eight, for the fifth sixteen, and so on, by doubling the price of every Nail, till we come to the last of the two and thirty Nails. At this the Cavalier smiled, and being a better Horseman than Arithmetician, soon struck up a Bargain, never doubting but that instead of paying the just value of a fine Horse, he had

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* A *Julio* is about 6. pence English.

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over-reached an experienc'd Jockey;
till at the summing up of the whole,
he found that the two and thirtieth
Nail , pay'd according to the con-
ditions agreed on, viz. That the pri-
ce of the following Nail should al-
ways be the double of the forego-
ing, amounted to the Sum of 214.
748. 364. 8. *Julios*, which reduced
to *Scudi* * came to two Hundred
and fourteen Millions , seven Hun-
dred and fourty Eight Thousand,
three Hundred and fixty four ;
Which is more money , than is actu-
ally in the Coffers not only of a
Private Gentleman , but even of the
greatest Prince in Europe. Here,
Dear Reader, I could wish you were
as good at your Arithmetick , as
I suppose you are a Devout Client
of our Lady's , since no less skill
is requir'd to take my Thought; How-
ever , if you are not good enough
at your Pen , to cast up this sum by
Arithmetick , try what you can do
with your fingers. Set your self be-
fore one of those Chess-boards, on
which you have , perchance more
than once , lost the best of golds , I
mean

* *A Scudo is about 6. shillings English.*

mean the irrecoverable Gold of Time : and do thus. Upon the first of those Sixty four little Squares into which the Chess-board is divided, put One grain of Corn, Two upon the second, Four upon the third, Eight upon the fourth, Sixteen upon the fifth, and so on till you come to an End, as in the other example. And give me leave to tell you, that not only in your Granaries, but even in all the World besides, there are not so many, I do not say Grains, but Sacks of Corn, as would belong to the Four and sixtieth little Square, which is the last of the Board. Because the very Ships that would be necessary to load such a Heap of Corn upon, allowing Three Thousand Sacks to every Ship, would come to One Thousand seven Hundred and seventy nine Millions, one Hundred and ninety nine Thousand, eight Hundred and fifty two Ships; that is, to more Ships than ever have sail'd upon the Ocean since the World has stood, or probably ever will. So that, according to this way of reckoning, it is manifest, that altho'

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the

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the Virgin in her Immaculate Conception had not receiv'd from the Eternal Word for Earnest, as it were, of that Immense Dowry he was preparing for her, any more than one Degree of Grace, that is, as much as a Child receives, who dies immediately after Baptism; yet notwithstanding in 64. Quarters of an Hour of the first Day only, that is, in sixteen Hours time, and only doubling her Capital precisely once in a Quarter, her Riches would have grown to so prodigious a Height, that it would tire out not only our weak Capacities, but even the most penetrating Understandings of the highest Seraphims, to comprehend the Sum of them. A Sum so excessive, that only to pronounce it, would be enough to take away a man's Breath. Hear a little, and observe what Numbers of accumulated Degrees of Grace must be gathered up in a Breath, to name them all. Eighteen Millions of Millions of Millions, four Hundred and forty six Thousand, seven Hundred and forty four Millions of Millions, seventy three Thousand seven

ven Hundred and nine Millions, five Hundred and fifty one Thousand, six Hundred and sixteen. (18. 446. 744. 730. 709. 551. 616.) Now consider what the Virgin's whole Stock , Principal and Interest , if I may so call it , will amount to, if we suppose that She had for her first Capital , not one Degree only of Grace , but as many as Saint *Michael* the Archangel and more : if we suppose that this redoubling of Grace which she made, was, not only for the space of two Thirds of a Day , but during the whole Seventy two Years of her life, without reckoning the time She was in her Mother's Womb : If again we suppose that by reason of the perfect Dominion She had over all her own Acts , She never produced any that was not deliberate ; Finally if we suppose , according to the Opinion of very grave Authors , that her Mind never ceased from acting meritoriously , even during her corporal Rest , but that whilst She was asleep , her Heart was still awake , *Ego dormio, & cor meum vigilat* Cant. 5. 2. Just as our

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Heart never ceases from its natural motions for our being asleep. All this, I say, being supposed, who shall be able to comprehend, much less give an Account of such an immense Treasure of Divine Grace? *Clavius* for a mighty proof of his skill, sums up the number of all those small grains of Sand, which would be requisite to fill up the vast empty space quite round the Earth to the very Firmament. And supposing that every single grain of Sand were so small, that ten Thousand of them would scarce be equal to the smallest Poppy seed; Yet he shews that the Sum of them all might be brought into a Number consisting of fifty one Cyphers, with one Unit before them. And yet what is all this, if compared with the Sum of the Virgin's Merits? supposing this redoubling of Grace which we have been speaking of, and which She made with so much Assiduity, not only every Hour of the Day, but almost every Minute and every Moment, we must needs Confess that in a very short space of her Life, She arrived to

a Sum , to the full as exorbitant as this. And therefore I am of Opinion , that not only at the End of her Life , when the Eternal Word himself came down in Person , to give , as I may say , the finishing stroke to that admirable Master-piece of his Divine Art , the Virgin Mary , and (as great Masters are wont to do , upon their best Pieces) to write under it with his own Hand , *Opus Excelsi*. Eccl. 43. *The Work of the most High* , that it might be said of her , that She was equal in Beauty to all the Heavenly Jerusalem , *Pulchra es, & decorata sicut Ierusalem*. Cant. 6. But even long before that time , and whilst She was yet , as I may say , under the divine Workman's hands. So that , not only when she died ; She possessed more Grace than all the Heavenly Citizens together , but even whilst She was actually living.

Behold, we are now ingaged in the widest and deepest part of this boundless Sea ; What will become of us ? Give me leave, most amiable Virgin, to turn my Eyes

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for a moment, upon Thy self. Thou saidst once of Thy self, that Thou wer't no more than a Rivulet of Water, *Ego sum trames Aqua.* Eccl. 24. 51. But then Thou didst cautiously add *Aqua immensa*, of Immense Waters. Because, indeed, in respect of Almighty God, the true Ocean of Sanctity, Thou art but a Rivulet; but in respect of us, Thou art a Rivulet *Aqua immensa* of immense Waters: there being no one who could ever boast to have discover'd the Bounds of such immense Waters, by crossing them from Shore to Shore. And now, as I said, we are in the middle of this great Sea, what way is there left for us to get to Land again? If there be none, we shall not be in pain: 'Twas the love of Thee, great Virgin, that brought us hither. The same shall keep us here still: And we will rejoyce to be lost in such Oceans of Wonders, that we may have so much the more Reason to praise, and admire the Divine Power, in the most wonderful and most beautiful Work, that ever came forth from the Hands of the Almighty.

But

But what will you say, Dear Reader and Devout Client of *Mary*, when you reflect, that to this prodigious Multiplication of Merit, which I have hitherto mention'd, I have not yet added that, which perchance may be look'd upon as the best part of the Principal Stock, on which this great Improvement is grounded. I mean that Grace which, in Schools, is called, *Ex Opere Operato*. A Grace which was given Her, not upon account of the Industry which she herself used in her meritorious Actions, (for that is properly, *Ex Opere Operantis*,) but upon *Christ's* own account; who wrought in her those Effects, which he thought most convenient, according to his Divine pleasure. 'Tis certain that if this Grace be computed with the Sum already multiplied, not only all the Algebra upon Earth, but even that of Heaven it self, will not find Figures enough to express it; unless we could penetrate into the Divine Understanding it self, and there discover the Mystery of those hidden Characters, of which he

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he has reserved the knowledge to himself alone. Who can conceive how many Graces , Favours and Heavenly Blessings the Eternal Word poured into the Virgin's sacred Breast , when she first received him within her Virginal Womb? How many , all the while he remain'd there ? How many , when being deliver'd of her sacred Burden, she gave him to the World ? How many , when being risen from the Dead , he came to Visit, and comfort Her in his glorious Triumph ? How many , when leaving her upon Earth , he Ascended into Heaven ? How many, when from Heaven he sent down the H. Ghost upon her , with whole Torrents of Heavenly Gifts? How many infine , when he came down himself in Person, to receive her blessed Spirit , which , like a Celestial Fire , not able to remain any longer out of its proper Sphere , left this Earth , to take her place next to him, in Heaven? These are all great Articles, and make a considerable Addition to the main Stock : And yet there is

is something more than all this. For 'tis a common Opinion, that the B. Virgin lived Four and Twenty Years, and some Months, after the Ascension of *Christ* into Heaven: During which time 'tis most probable, that according to the custom of the Primitive Christians, She communicated every Day. So that, to take a faithful Account of her Communions, we shall find that She received within her Breast our Lord, and her own Divine Son, in the Sacrament, above eight Thousand eight Hundred and fifty times. Now, there is no one that does not know that, in the Sacrament of the Altar, Grace is distributed in proportion to the Disposition of the Person that approaches to it. Wherefore, since the Disposition of the Bd. Virgin was certainly beyond all that we can conceive; it cannot be doubted but that the Treasures of Grace which She received from her Divine Son, were beyond all expression: And tho', under the Vail of the Sacramental Species, he could hide from her Eyes his visible Presence, yet he could never conceal

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conceal his Love. Now, if the Wife-man should ask, who would undertake to number up the grains of Sand that are in the Sea, or the drops of Rain which fall upon the Mountains, *Arenam maris, & pluvia guttas quis dinumerabit?* Eccl. 1. I would Answer, that 'twould be much the easier Task to reckon up all that, than to sum up any part of *Mary's* Merit. No Plummet will serve to fathom so great a Depth. And tho' I am, as I may say, but a few steps off the Shore, yet already I find no Bottom. So that, *St. Iohn Damascen* had good Reason to stile our Lady, not indeed a Sea, as her Name seems to import, but, *Gratia Abyssus immensa**, an Immense Abyfs of Grace: for after all, there is no Sea so deep, or so wide, but some Measure may be taken of it; whereas an Abyfs is absolutely beyond all Measure. *Profundum Abyssi quis dimensus est?* Eccl. 1. 2. Which way soever I look, I see no Bounds: Wherefore, Dear Reader, here I must leave you, where I my self am lost. From any
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* *Damas. Ora. 2. de Assump.*

Part of the Sea, I might hope in time to bring you to Land again, but to bring you out of an Abyss, I own, is not in my power.

§. V.

I Cannot leave this Subject, without taking notice that this Opinion, of the Virgin Mary's Grace being superiour to the Grace of all the other Saints and Angels in Heaven together, was so agreeable to Her, that She expressly sent a Message of Thanks to the learned *Suarez*, for teaching it; He being the first among the Scholasticks, that promulged this pious Opinion, and defended it publickly in the famous University of *Salamanca*; * Which to me is a very powerful Argument to embrace it. I know there has appear'd an Author since, who not over-favourably inclined to the Opinions of so great a Man, for want of a better Argument to oppose this Opinion in particular, thought it might suffice to assure the World upon his own bare *Ipse dixit*,
that

* *In Vita ipsius.*

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that in this, *Suarez* only went by guess, and shot, as we say, at Random. Be this as it will, I am very authentically assured that the Virgin, as I said before, sent Thanks to Him that first proposed this Opinion, and I have not yet heard that She ever sent any to Him that opposed it. Wherefore, if a Thesis weigh'd with so much maturity and Deliberation, supported with so many Congruities, favour'd by the Sentiments of so many Holy Fathers, and defended afterwards by the united Suffrages of the whole University of *Salamanca*, may be called a Guessing, or a Shooting at Random, we may truly say that *Suarez* had a very good Guess, to light upon the Truth so happily as he did, and to hit the Mark with a Random shot. And indeed, the Virgin *Mary* is an Object so conspicuous, that in speaking her Praises, no Blind man can miss, much less a Marks-man so skilful as *Suarez* was.

C H A P. IV.

The fourth motive of Devotion to the Bd. Virgin, is the universal Consent of the whole Church in honouring her.

§. I.

HONOUR is not always a Testimony of Virtue so authentical and so free from Errour, as to challenge our Belief beyond Exception. Rather, as it is but a Shadow of Virtue, so in this particular it retains the Nature of a Shadow, inasmuch as it often falls short of the just Stature or Height of Merit, and often also exceeds it. This however can have no place, when in the Person who pays the Honour, there is neither Ignorance to blind the Understanding, nor Passion to over-rule the Will; Because in this case, Honour is no more a Shadow, or a dull Representation of the Object; but rather a Picture which expresses it to the life; Tho' even then, if we will

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still

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still have it to be no more than a Shadow of Merit , let it be , at least , like the Shadow of a Sundial , which never fails to tell the true Hour. This previous Consideration will help to make us Understand how much the Virgin is worthy of Honour , since the Church has thought it but just and reasonable to honour Her so much as She does. For, the Church of *Christ* being the Throne of Truth , establish'd upon Earth by Truth it self , it necessarily follows that Flattery and Deceit can have no part in the Honours She prescribes unto *Mary*. So that, this Shadow, if you will call it so, which never leaves the Virgin , may serve for a secure Rule of Proportion whereby to measure the greatness of her Merit.

Three principal Conditions must concur to the raising of that Honour, which is pay'd unto Virtue, to the highest degree of Esteem and Respect. The Antiquity of it , the Universality of it , and the Sublimeness of it. All these conditions are wonderfully found in the Honour, and Worship which the Church pays unto *Mary*.

§.II.

§. II.

And first , the Worship of this great Virgin was certainly very ancient , since we may truly say that it began with the beginning of all things : So that , if we pretend to discover the hidden Sources of this *Nilus* , we shall be obliged to run up , not only to the Terrestrial Paradise , but also to the Celestial one , to find it out. For, as the Angels from their first Creation, and in quality of Viators , had an obscure knowledge of *Christ* by Faith , and from the first instant of their Happiness , and in quality of Comprehensors, they had a perfect Intuitive knowledge of the same Christ, *In Verbo* , as we say in Schools , that is , in the Eternal Word ; so from the very beginning they had a like Knowledge of the Virgin *Mary* , as of that Rich Plant, which in time to come , was to produce that beautiful Fruit. And if in both those States, of Viators and Comprehensors, they saw Her and knew Her for what She was , as

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they certainly did , it cannot be doubted but they immediately Adored her , as the Mother of their common Lord : * for as *St. Iohn Damascen* says , *Decet Dei Matrem ea qua filij sunt possidere , & ab omnibus adorari.* † It is fitting that the Mother of God should enjoy what belongs to her Son , and be Adored by all. In the same manner , the Virgin was known and honour'd by Man upon Earth , from the very first Creation of the World : there being no Reason why Earth should startle at paying any honour whatsoever to the Virgin , when Heaven it self had given the first example. Particularly our two first Parents *Adam* and *Eve* , like those high Mountains *Caucasus* and *Cassius*, which are said to discover the break of Day , four hours sooner than the Plains that ly under them , discovered this Divine *Aurora* , above forty Ages before it began to appear above our Horizon , in a visible manner to all the World. For, Almighty God desirous to apply an
early

* *Suar. 3. p. 10. 2. Dis. 22. Sect. 1.*

† *S. Ioan. Dam. Ora. 1. de Nat. Virg.*

early Remedy to the mortal Wound they had given themselves and their Posterity, by the Sin they had so lately committed, was bountifully pleased to comfort those unfortunate Exiles, by giving them notice of another Woman, who by being Mother, tho' a Virgin, to another Man, and more than a Man, should repair their losses with greater advantage, than if they had never fallen. And, to the end they should conceive a great Esteem of the Sanctity of this Woman, and consequently of the Honour due unto Her, he gave them to Understand that between Her and the Serpent who had infected them with his Poison, there should be for ever a most implacable Enmity from Generation to Generation: and therefore in their presence He denounced unto the Serpent this perpetual War, in these unlimited Words,

Inimicitias ponam inter Te & Mulierem, & inter semen tuum & semen illius. *

Gen. 3. 15. * And this extraordinary knowledge imparted to our first Parents was successively com-

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* Cajet. in eum locum Gen.

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municated from Age to Age , to the Patriarchs and Prophets , who had as clear a fore-knowledge of the Virgin *Mary* , as they had of the future *Messias*. And therefore many of them , like Sentinels who from the top of a Tower give notice of the long wish'd for Succours to their besieged Companions below, beholding in Prophetick spirit this Virgin Mother , with the Infant *Iesus* in her Arms , coming , as I may say , at a distance , gave the happy tidings of Both , to their fellow Mortals , who in this Vale of Tears and Misery , were not only besieged on all sides , but even oppressed with Evils , without hopes of Recovery by any other means, than by this.

Nor was this Knowledge so confined within the narrow limits of God's chosen People , that some dim Light of it did not also break out amongst the Gentiles. It is certain that every one of the ten famous Sibyls left something in their Writings of the Bd. Virgin , and some of them in terms so proper and so precise , that they even pointed

pointed her out by her very name of *Mary*; Almighty God having so ordain'd it, that as She was to be the Universal Mother, not only of the Israelites, but also of the Gentiles, so not only the Israelites should have their glorious Prophecies of her, but the Gentiles also should have theirs; that all might be equally disposed to desire her coming. And therefore many Ages before *Mary* appear'd in the World, there were several Temples and Altars erected expressly to her Honour amongst the Gentiles; and Almighty God was pleased from those early times, to work many Wonders in their favour, upon her account. * *Cedrenus* makes mention of such a Temple, as built by the *Argonautes*, and dedicated to Her, by the advice of their Oracle; a Temple, which being afterwards unjustly usurped from Her, was again restored unto her under *Zeno*. The *Egyptians* almost in every Corner represented her, with a Child lying in a Crib before her. And the *Druides*, those famous Priests among

* *S. Thom. Bex. de sign. Eccl. sig. 37.*

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among the Gauls, a Hundred years before the coming of *Christ*, in the City of *Chartres*, where, as *Cesar* himself relates of them, they used to hold their Assemblies, had a Temple under ground dedicated to her, under this Title, *Virgini paritura*, that is, to the *Future Virgin Mother*, whom they expected as the greatest Prodigy the World ever saw. In this Temple she was represented in an Image, which became so famous for Wonders, that it even restored to Life the deceased Son of *Melancaniacus*, a Prince of great power amongst them; For which, and many other extraordinary favours, she gain'd so high an Esteem among those People, that *Priscus* their King, in a publick and solemn manner cast himself, and his whole Kingdom at her feet, and made it Tributary to her, * as if he had foreseen some of those examples, which follow'd many Ages after among Christian Kings and Princes, who took it for the greatest honour to become Vassals to the Virgin, and to put themselves and their Kingdoms

under

* *Reuiland. in Parthenica.*

under her Protection. From whence it appears manifestly how much Almighty God is sollicitous for the Honour and Glory of the Virgin; since for this End, before She herself appear'd in the World, He would have the very Shadow of her, as I may say, to be beneficial to the World: and that not only the Life-giving Fruit of that noble Plant, but even the bare Leaves of it should bring safety and happiness to those who should take shelter under them.

But to return from these dusky Shades of Gentility to the bright Day of Christianity: When the fullness of Time was come, the Church Militant upon Earth had so well learnt from the Triumphant in Heaven, how to honour the Virgin *Mary*, that even whilst she was yet living, the Faithful came flocking from all parts to *Nazareth*, to know and see her; esteeming it so great a happiness and an honour to be acquainted with the Mother of God, that they thought the very sight of her only, more than a sufficient recompence for all the long journies they had taken, for that

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that End , from the remotest parts of the World. Nor was this pious eagerness in the vulgar people only, who are generally apt to run into excesses. The Apostles themselves, as they were the first in Dignity and Authority amongst the Faithful , so they were the first also in zeal, to teach them by their own example, how to honour the Virgin. Thus the great St. Denis attests, that he himself being present, many of them came from divers parts of the World to visit her , and amongst the rest St. Peter himself, Head of them all ; for no other Reason , but to contemplate anew the greatest work of the Divine Magnificence, and to extol the Author thereof, with the highest Encomiums their pious zeal could suggest. *Non aliâ de causa quàm ut Mariam contemplarentur , & ex ejus contemplatione , infinitâ potentia praditam Bonitatem, quantum ferret imbecillitas eorum laudarent.* * We all know what sublime Titles Saint James gives her in his Liturgy ; as also the Temple he himself dedicated to her Honour in Saragosa;

as

* S. Diony. de div Nom. c. 3.

as St. *Iohn* did afterwards in *Asia*, and St. *Peter* in *Rome*: To say nothing of so many others which were erected to her whilst yet alive, with equal Zeal and strife, as it were, who should outdo the other, by the disciples of the Prophet *Elias* upon Mount *Carmel*, by *Martha* in *Marseilles*, by the *Magi* in *Cranagor*, and by the Queen *Candace* in *Ethiopia*. * And this is the Milk with which the Church was nursed, as I may say, from the Cradle, Reverence and Devotion to *Mary*; So that, the Worship of *Christ*, and that of his Bd. Mother was propagated throughout the Christian World, by the same steps and same degrees. And altho' Time, the devourer of all things, has enviously robb'd us of the distinct marks of this primitive Worship, and Devotion towards the Virgin *Mary*, yet notwithstanding, as those few Remains we have of the ancient Buildings, are sufficient to give us an Idea of their Magnificence, so that

* *Nieremb. Trop. Mar. l. 5. c. 2.*

Boz. l. 9. c. 9.

Locrius. L. 3. c. 3.

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that little we know of the Devotion of those happy Ages, is Argument enough, to infer from thence the zeal and fervour of it.

Tho' even in this, the Faithful were not alone. Many among the Gentiles, as they knew and honoured this great Lady before the coming of *Christ*, as we have already observed, so we find they have done the same since. We have very Authentick Memoirs of a most Ancient Temple in *Calecut*, of another in *Coulan*, of a third in the *Canary* Islands: and of a most sumptuous one amongst the *Chinese*, with many famous Images also of our Lady, in the great *Catai*, where those people paying their Worship to a *Virgin Mother*, honour'd the *Virgin Mary*, without knowing who She was; Thus, through the thickest Clouds of their Ignorance and Idolatry, they had some small Ray of Light breaking in upon them, from that brighter Moon, even tho' she did not shine upon their Hemisphere. *

But what is still more admirable
in

* *Apud eosdem, ut sup.*

in this Worship , and Devotion towards the Virgin , is , that tho' it be of so long standing in the World, yet it does not decay with Age; but on the contrary , the further it goes , the more it seems to grow strong and vigorous. For , the Christians of these Days , who, tho' they glory in the same spiritual Birth, by Holy Baptism , with those of the Primitive times , yet in their Lives and Manners are as different from them, as Lead is from Gold , which happen also sometimes to grow together in the same Mine; yet , I say, in this one Respect of honouring the Virgin , the modern Christians seem to be as zealous as the Primitive , and even in some sort to surpass them; receiving daily, for this End, new Fervour and new Encouragements from the Father of Lights , who according to his promise , of recompensing with proportionable Honours, every service done to his Divine Son , *Si quis mihi ministraverit , honorificabit eum Pater meus.* Joa. 12. 26. has decreed that She who gave him his very Life and Maintenance upon Earth , should receive for it such

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Honours

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Honours as were futable to the importance of the service, and the Dignity of the Employment.

§. III.

ANd thus I find that together with the Antiquity of this Worship, I have already demonstrated, at least in great part, the Universality and Extent of it: For, by what has been said, it clearly appears that not only all Ages, but also all Nations have endeavoured with equal Zeal and Fervour to out-do each other in honouring the Virgin *Mary*. And therefore when the Divine Oracle had said of her, by the mouth of his Prophet *Isaias*, *Ponam te in superbiam seculorum.* 60.

15. I will put Thee for the glory of all Ages; he immediately added, *Gaudium in generationem & generationem*, and for the Joy and Comfort of all Nations. I could wish the narrow Bounds I have prescribed to this little Book would give me leave to indulge my Inclination upon this subject. I could shew you
people

people of all Nations, Zealous Admirers and fervorous Clients of the Virgin, and together with them Kings and Princes greater Admirers still than their People. What wonders in this kind could not I relate of a *Constantin* the Great, a *Charles* the Great, and a *Henry II.* amongst the Emperours? Of a *Lewis IX.* a *Robert* the only one of that name, amongst the Kings of France? Of an *Alphonfus III.* and a *Ferdinand III.* among the Kings of Spain? What of an *Edward* in England, a *Boleslaus* in Poland, a *Wenceslaus* in Bohemia, a *Stephen* in Hungary; and of so many other Monarchs, who from their Earthly Thrones have been raised to the Honour of our Altars, having first signalized themselves no less in the Love of *Iesus Christ*, than in that of his Blessed Mother? 'Tis enough to run over the Ecclesiastical Annals with a cursory Eye, to be convinced with what tenderness of Affection this great Queen of Heaven has always been honour'd and beloved in the Church, by all the most illustrious Personages of it, either for Dignity, Learning, or

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Sanctity;

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Sanctity ; and what high Praises they have all unanimously conspired to give her ; it being certain that the Holy Fathers often speak of her in such Terms , that without some favourable Interpretation , they may rather seem too Exorbitant. If I were to reckon up all those learned Pens , which from time to time have been consumed in Writing her Praises , what a prodigious Library would not they compose by this time ? In every Corner of the World the Virgin is seen in her Statues , and Images , for the pious Comfort of those , who being yet Pilgrims upon Earth , are banish'd for a time from the sight of her glorious Face. She is represented to us in all our most pretious Woods, Marbles , Stones , and Metals ; She is drawn out in the liveliest Colours by the best Hands of the most eminent Painters : Her name and Praises are daily sounding in our Ears in the most harmonious Conforts of our best Musick : She is glorified and called upon, by all that are in Misery and distress , as their secure Refuge ; by Sailers in storms,

as

as their Haven ; by the Ignorant , as their Guide ; by the Sick and Infirm , as their Health. By Souldiers in bat-tel , as the Giver of Victories. Nay oftentimes the Victorious Kings and Emperours themselves have descend-ed from their Triumphant Chariots , to seat the Virgin in their places , and to give her the honour of their Triumphs , by hanging before her Images , the Banners of their con-quer'd Enemies , their Arms , their Spoils , and all their Victorious Trophies. What shall I say more ? Are not Religious Orders the most learned , the most pious , and the most judicious part of the Church ? It cannot be doubted. Now , all these by the Honours they unanimously conspire to pay unto this great Vir-gin , by publishing and preaching her Praises in all the four Quarters of the World , by propagating the Devotion to her , by glorying , as they all do , to fight under her Protection , may truly be said to be the living Tongue of the Church , whereby she expresses her constant and universal Sentiments concerning the Honour due to the glorious Vir-

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gin Mary. Wherefore, if what Aristotle says, be true, *Quod omnibus videtur Verum est*. What all Men judge to be true, cannot be otherwise than true; we must certainly conclude, that, since the Virgin appears worthy of all the Honour and Worship that can be pay'd to a pure Creature, to all the Nations in the World where the Gospel has ever been preach'd, to all Degrees of Persons, from the Prince down to the Peasant, to all the learned Writers and Holy Fathers, to all the Saints, to all wise men, and to all Religious Orders; it must be undeniably true, that She is what She appears to be, worthy of all that Honour. And whilst I am writing this, methinks I see that beautiful *Esther*, who like the Peace-boding Rainbow, being sent to calm the Mind of the incensed *Affuerus*, came into his presence gently leaning upon one of her Maids of honour whilst another held up her Train. This, I think with my self, is just the appearance which the Virgin is now making before the Tribunal of God, and the Throne of his Mercy. She

comes

comes in, waited upon by the Angelical and Humane Natures, as two Hand-maids ambitious of the honour of attending her into the Divine presence: with this difference, that the Angelical Nature which goes before; and supports the Arm, is that on which the Virgin reposes with delight; whereas the Humane which follows behind, and gathers up the Train, is that from which the Virgin is yet expecting a faithful Imitation of her Royal Virtues. If therefore an Object of this Nature is sufficient to charm the Heart even of an Angry God, sure it must be more than sufficient to set ours all in a Flame of Heavenly Love towards so amiable a Person.

§. IV.

IT remains now, that I explicate the best part of this Honour, which the Church has always pay'd and do's still pay unto the Virgin; which is the Sublimeness and Excellency of it: for without this, the other two Qualities already mention'd

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tion'd would be , after all , but
very inconsiderable : Just as it falls
out in the Commerce of Mony,
where the Antiquity of the Coin,
and the Universality of its Course
would be little regarded , if the
intrinsecal value of the Metal were
not answerable to both. As to the
determining to what degree of Ex-
cellency this Worship and Honour
due to *Mary*, may be allow'd to rise
above what is lawfully payable to
other Saints , Methinks , I see the
Church , from the very beginning
full of admiration and surprise , at-
tentively consulting with her self, as
formerly *Assuerus* did with his favour-
ite Courtier, about what was to be
done to the Person he had a mind to
honour , *Quid debet fieri homini quem*
Rex honorare desiderat ? Esth. 6. 6. What
kind of Honours shall we grant to
that incomparable Woman , whom
no less than a God , her own Son,
is so extremely desirous to see exalt-
ed above all his other Creatures ?
On the one side , to honour her
purely as a Creature , seems too
little ; because She is in possession
of a Dignity which hath something
of

of the Infinite. On the other side, to honour her as something Divine, would certainly be too much ; because 'twould be to communicate a Name altogether Incommunicable, and which can only be appropriated to One. What therefore must be done ? *Quid debet fieri* ? If I might presume for a while to lend Words, and Thoughts to inanimated things, in order to explain my own meaning , I could imagine some such Deliberation amongst the Clouds, meeting in Counsel upon the Question , of what Rank or Dignity ought to be appointed in the Heavens , to the Meteor commonly called *Parhelium*. To look upon it barely as a Cloud , such as the rest are , is too little ; because if it be a Cloud , 'tis a Cloud impregnated , as I may say , with the Sun. To make it pass for a true Sun, is too much : because nothing can properly be so call'd which has not the Reality and Nature of a Sun, tho' it partakes of its extrinfecal Beauties, even to an Excess. Now , because Honours as well as Favours ought rather to be given above the Merits
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of the Person, than beneath them, one would think that the Church ought to have taken the same Resolution, as *Assuerus* did when he decreed Regal Honours to *Mardocheus*. And therefore in this doubtful Case She should have appointed those Honours to the Virgin, which are proper to the King of Kings, her own Divine Son, I mean Honours absolutely Divine; *Decet enim Dei Matrem ea quæ filij sunt possidere*, as we cited before out of St. John Damascen, & *ab Omnibus Adorari*. It being but reasonable, that the Mother of God should partake of the Privileges of her Son, and be Adored by all. For, if the same Church did not stick to communicate those Divine Honours of strict Adoration, to the bare Wood on which *Christ* laid down his Life for our Redemption, how could She fear to communicate the same Honours to the Virgin, who gave him that very Life? In fine, upon the Cross *Christ* only spilt his Blood for the Salvation of the World, to wit, that very same pretious gold which he receiv'd from his Mother. If therefore

fore we Adore with that kind of supreme Worship, which is call'd *Latria*, the bare Counting-board, as I may call it, on which *Christ* pay'd down that pretious gold; with how much more Reason ought we to Adore with the same Divine Worship, the Mine it self from whence he borrow'd that very Gold, which he so liberally disbursed for our sakes? And the Church, to shew that she is far from being fond of Excesses in this kind, especially when either the Ignorance of some of her Children, or the Malice of her Enemies may put a wrong Construction upon her most innocent Intentions, chose rather to act with the Virgin with the greatest rigour, by refusing unto Her, what she grants to an inanimate piece of Wood. But, shall we think for this, that the Church shew'd any less Esteem for the Virgin? Quite contrary: She rather shew'd by this cautious way of proceeding, that She esteem'd her in a manner infinitely. For, as long as she permitted Divine honours to be pay'd to the Cross, she easily perceiv'd there could

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could be no danger of any mistake since it appears at first sight, even to the most illiterate, that those Honours are not given to the Wood it self, which is incapable of them, but to *Christ*, who triumphed upon that Wood: Whereas if such Honours were communicated to *Mary*, the Case would be quite different: for then People would be apt to suspect that those Honours were attributed to Her, not for any of those extrinsecal Advantages and Prerogatives of having receiv'd the Saviour of the World so often upon her Arms, as the Cross might be said to do, when he was nailed upon it; of approaching him so near, and touching his sacred Body so often, which was also proper to the Cross, when he was stretch'd out upon it; or of helping him, as She did in some manner, towards the great Work of the Redemption, which in some sense might also be said of the Cross, inasmuch as it was the chief Instrument of his Death and Passion; But for some more intimate and intrinsecal participation She might have with him

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of the true Divinity. For this reason, the Church has prudently forbid any such Worship of Adoration to be pay'd unto her, tho' otherwise justly due. And yet by this very means, the Church has carry'd her Honour to the highest degree that was possible. She has proceeded in this business by the same Rule of discretion and good Policy, as the Angels did concerning the Body of *Moyfes* after his death. They hid it from the Jewish People, for fear they should run into some abominable Idolatry upon his account, as they were apt enough to do, having already upon occasions shewn too much inclination that way. But this was so far from declaring *Moyfes* unworthy of Honour, that it was rather a proclaiming him worthy to be honour'd in the highest manner. For, by this they gave grounds to believe that they look'd upon his Merits to be such, that he might be taken by Men for another God; Erroneously indeed, but yet by an Error which would carry with it such an imposing Air of Truth, that the Jews, otherwise so fond of Ex-

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cesses, might easily be deluded by it. Wherefore, if these Angels had with their own hands raised a Mausoleum to this great Prophet, as rich, and as sumptuous as *Salomon's* Temple was, they would not, in my Opinion, have shewn so much their Esteem of him, as they did when they stole away his Body from the sight of Men, and hid it upon Mount *Sina*. And this is what the Church hath done in respect of the Virgin *Mary*. She has declared her certainly very great by the Honours she allows her: But she declares her still greater by those which she refuses her; since she does not refuse them, because they may not with good Reason be allowed, but she refuses them, purely because there appears too much Reason to allow them; The Perfections, the Sanctity, and the Dignity of *Mary* being so immensely great, that the weak Eyes of Mortals would have too much difficulty to distinguish between those Honours which are personally due to her as to her self, and those which are only due to her, as being so lively an Image of
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the Divine Sun of Justice. Rather in this glorious *Parhelium* they would be apt to confound the Sun Representative with the Sun Represented, the Sun in the Cloud with the Sun in the Heavens, the Copy with the Original, and often take one for the other. And, if notwithstanding the Church's caution in so expressly refusing to the Virgin the supreme Adoration of *Latria*, there have not been wanting, as St. *Epiphanius* writes, many Hereticks especially the *Collyridians*, who have foolishly taken her for a Goddess, what do we think would have happen'd, if the Church had permitted those Honours to be attributed to Her? I am apt to believe that even a Saint *Denis* the *Arcopagite*, that is to say, the most learned man that was at that time upon Earth, would have run no small risk of Idolatrizing as well as his Neighbours; since he has left written of himself, that going for the first time to see the Virgin *Mary*, he discover'd in her such an Air of Majesty above all that is Humane, that had not Faith, at that sudden glance, held him

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back, he had certainly thrown himself prostrate at her feet, to Adore her for a Deity.

As for the rest, The Church pays unto the Virgin all the Honour and Worship that can be allowed her, without running against that Rock of Idolatry, which we have now spoken of. She has decreed unto Her a Worship peculiar to her alone, inferiour to God, but superiour to any that is granted to all the other Saints, or Angels together; which is therefore called *Hyperdulia*. She applies unto Her those Abstracting Terms, which otherwise only belong to God, of Our Hope, our Life, our Sweetness, our Way, our Comfort. She honours her in our daily Sacrifices of the Altar: Nor is she contented with this; but she calls upon her immediately next to God, in the solemn Praises, which are daily offered unto God himself, in the Divine Office. She dedicates to her Name one Day in every Week; and in Memory of Her, she prescribes not one, but several Feasts throughout the Year, and many of them of

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Precept. Three times every day, she invites all the Faithful to salute her with the Angel, by an unanimous ringing of all her Bells, Morning, Noon, and Night. Finally in all her greatest Necessities, and publick Calamities she takes her recourse to Her, either by Processions, Prayers, or publick Vows, to shew by all these publick demonstrations of Honour and Worship, how she looks upon the Virgin to be the next in Power and Dignity, to Almighty God himself.

§. V.

THUS therefore the Church honours the Virgin *Mary*, because Almighty God, to whom it belongs to direct his Church, will have her thus to be honoured. *Sic honoratur, quem Rex voluerit honorare. Esth. 6.* And that it may appear more evidently, that it is truly God himself who will have it so, he has so disposed things, that the honouring of the Virgin in this manner has ever proved most advantageous and beneficial to the Church. Insomuch

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that the Sovereign Pastors thereof, and God's chief Oracles upon Earth, and Interpreters of his Divine Will, have all given us to Understand by their own example, that in all publick Calamities, the most powerful means to obtain speedy succours from Heaven, is to honour the Virgin Mary. Of this I could produce examples without End; but I shall confine my self to a few of the most remarkable. *Frederick II.* one of those ambitious Princes, so jealous of setting alone in the Throne, that they will not suffer any one to Reign with them, not even God himself, having long devised with himself how he could destroy the Church, and take Her life away at one stroke, resolved at length, as the shortest and most efficacious way, to take off her Head: well knowing that it was as impossible for the mystical Body of the Church to subsist without a Pope, as for the Natural Body to live without a Head. Wherefore after the death of *Celestin IV.* he used all his Endeavours to thwart the Election of a new Pope. But with all that, he could do either
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by open violence or secret correspondence and Intrigues, he could never hinder but that after a long Debate of one and twenty Months *Innocent IV.* was chosen Pope. And what means do you think this new Pope used, as soon as he was chosen, in order to prevent the like misfortunes for the future? He took *Mary* for his Buckler of Defence, by adding an Octave to the Feast of her glorious Nativity. And thus, that very Year in which he was assum'd to the Chair of Saint *Peter*, he discharged that solemn Vow, which the whole Clergy had made to the great Mother of God, in order to obtain that so much desired Election. * Where did *Paul II.* find a secure Haven, in the midst of the Storms and Tempests of his turbulent times, but in the Protection of the Virgin, whose Honour he endeavoured to increase in the year 1464. by ordering the Feast of her Presentation in the Temple, to be kept solemn throughout the whole Church? † And when

* *Baron. an. 1243.*

† *Molan. in addit. Marty.*

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when the Church was almost torn to pieces by a fifty years Schism, and her bleeding wounds were laid open on every side, with what healing Balsam did *Boniface IX.* close them up at length, but by amplifying the Worship of *Mary*, the Queen of Peace; and for that End promulgating the Feast of her Visitation, which had never been kept in the Church till that time? * *Leo IV.* added an Octave to the most ancient Feast of the Assumption, in order to destroy a monstrous Basilisk which infected the whole City of Rome with his pestiferous Breath, and fill'd it with Death and destruction. † And before him *Hilary I.* to extirpate those infamous lewd Games call'd *Lupercalia*, which poisoned the whole Christian World, worse than any Dragon, instituted the Feast of the Purification of that Virgin, who being purer than the Sun could communicate of her Purity to others, but could receive no addition to it her self. * Finally *Grego-*

* *Baron. in notis. 2. Jul.*

† *Sigeb. an. 847.*

* *Baron. an. 495.*

ry IX. to relieve the Church from the Oppression of *Frederick*, order'd that the publick Bells should be rung three times a day , 'to invite all the Faithful to joyn in Prayer, in order to implore the Protection of *Mary*. * And *Vrban* II. desirous to raise a solid Bank against the whole Tide of the Ottoman Fury breaking in upon the Christians , commanded that all the Priests and Clergy should daily recite the Office of the Bd. Virgin; † to say nothing of what has been done almost under our own Eyes , by Bd. *Pius* V. lately assumed to the Honour of our Altars , in order to rescue from the Jaws of the Turkish Tyrant that part of afflicted Christendom , which he had already devour'd by his late Conquests , and to preserve the rest from falling under the same misfortune.

And after such Proofs, can we desire any more, to be convinced how zealous the Church , the best Judge of Virtue and Merit , has always been to promote the Honour and

Worship

* *Arn. l 5. lign. Vita. c. 20.*

† *Baro. an. 1095.*

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Worship of the Bd. Virgin , and how much Benefit and advantage it has constantly receiv'd by thus promoting it ? And if so , how can you, Dear Reader, refuse to concur with the United Hearts of All in honouring Her , whom All so unanimously concur to honour , as if they were but one Heart ?

C H A P. V.

The fifth motive of Devotion to the Virgin , are the Benefits we receive from Her.

§. I.

THe first that inflav'd the Liberty of Man , and brought it into subjection , was not some fierce Conquerour with Sword in hand. 'Twas a Conquest of another kind; of Friendship and Favours. *Qui invenit beneficium invenit Compedes*, says the Philosopher very acutely. He that finds Favours , finds Fetters; And Fetters so strong , that whosoever do's not know by his own experience,

experience, how forcible they are to bind, either has no Heart, or do's not deserve to have any; since he can refuse himself to an Affection, which finds admittance even into the Breast of Tigers, I mean, to Gratitude. If therefore there should be any one, who were not inclined to Love our Bd. Lady, for her own absolute Goodness and intrinsecal Perfections, whereby She is worthy of the highest Love, how can he refuse her his Heart, for those Favours at least and Benefits which he daily receives from her, and by which She is no less Good in respect of Us? Now as to the Favours and Blessings we have receiv'd from the Virgin, I think they may all be comprised in these few but pithy words, *De qua natus est Iesus*; Of whom *Iesus* was born; Words, which are at one and the same time, an absolute Compendium of *Mary's* Greatness and our Happiness. She has given us our *Iesus*, and in giving him, what is there in the Divine Treasury which she has not given us? *Quomodo cum illo non Omnia nobis donavit?* Rom. 8. 32.

But

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But to weigh this *Omnia* in a just Ballance , we should first comprehend the profound Depth of Misery and Confusion, all Mankind lay buried in , and would still continue to groan under to this day , were it not for this *Iesus* , and this Saviour which *Mary* has given us. If this were once well understood , we should soon be convinced of the Greatness of the Blessings , which this Heavenly *Aurora* has brought unto Us , by bringing with her this Divine Sun , to shine upon our Horizon.

Imagine with your self that the remotest Corner of *Greenland* , a Country partly unknown , and partly not worth knowing , had been to this Day , not for six Months only in the Year , as it is in effect, but for six whole Ages together, without ever seeing the Sun ; so that the generation of all mixt Bodies being at a stand , the Seas and Rivers frozen , the Plants withered , the Fields and Meadows dried up, the Animals but half alive, the Inhabitants themselves more like walking Ghosts than Men , the whole
Country

Country more like a dark Cave haunted with Sprights, than a place fit for Men to live in. Then tell me, if in that frightful Darkness there should unexpectedly rise upon that unfortunate Horizon, a most beautiful *Aurora*, bringing after her a more beautiful Sun; and a Sun so beneficial, that in a short time, the whole Scene should be changed: the face of the Earth renew'd, and refresh'd with new springs of Water: The Seas and Rivers open'd, the Fields and Meadows new clothed with variety of Greens, Plants, and Flowers, new life and vigour restored to all living Creatures: In a word, the Inhabitants should now enjoy little less than a Paradise of Delights in that very place, which but a moment before was a meer Sepulchre of Horror and Confusion. What Love, what Gratitude, what Thanks would not these poor *Groenlanders* think themselves obliged to return to this their Benefactress, this Light and Life-giving *Aurora*? 'Twould be almost a wonder, if in a sudden surprise, and dazled with so many

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Rays

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Rays at once of Light, of Joy, and of Profit, they should not fall down and Adore that Sun, and that *Aurora*, as Originals of the Divinity, whereas they are but meer Figures and very imperfect Copies of it. This however is certain, that as all the Effects of Nature are but so many favours we receive from the kind Influences of this our Material Sun, so they ought also in some manner to be look'd upon no less by the People we have been speaking of, as the favours of that kind *Aurora*, which after so long and so dismal a Night, brought that very Sun upon their Hemisphere. But here, I confess, I cannot but lament the faithless Treachery of our deluded and deluding Senses. They fairly promise to help us out upon an Occasion to explain a Truth, and to make it more intelligible: And when they have ingaged us into a Labyrinth, there they leave us, to get out as we can. 'Twas by their suggestion that I ventured upon this Comparison, tho' more Imaginary than real, in hopes to make my self be better understood. But what was

was this any more than to put a Coal into my hand, instead of a Pencil, in order to draw out the likeness of Gold or Scarlet? For, what proportion can there be between the Darkness of our Eyes, and the Darkness of Sin? Or what perfections of the Increased Sun can be tolerably expressed by this our material Sun, this Sun, I say, who is only beautiful and beneficial to us, inasmuch^l as he is a Shadow of the other? And yet, who was it that brought unto Us this infinitely better Sun, in the dead of that dark Night of Sin, in which Mankind lay involved for so many long Ages? 'Twas the Virgin Mary. *Ego feci ut oriretur in Calis lumen indeficiens.* Eccl. 24. 6. I, says she, was that Benefactress *Aurora*, who brought that Sun to shine upon the Humane Hemisphere, which before only shin'd upon the Angelical. By me, and by my means he was at length made visible to the Eyes of the Body, who before was only visible to those of the Mind. In my Womb he mitigated the immense Rays of his Glory, that he might

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be the better enjoy'd by weak Mortals : In my Womb he diminished his Greatness : In my Womb he humbled his Majesty : Finally within my Womb he became so tender and compassionate of miserable Man , who was always flying from him , tho' the best of Fathers, that to run after him like a vile Slave , and to gain his Affections, he did not disdain to penetrate, even deeper than the material Sun can do, into the poorest Cottages , where I first conceiv'd him : into open Stables , where I brought him into the World : into Woods and Desarts, where I fled with him , to save him, a tender Infant , from the cruelty of his Persecutors ; into Tradesmen's Shops , where I kept him , and where he helped a poor Carpenter to work for his living ; And infine even under ground , where I buried him , when he sat for a momentary Night in his Passion , to rise again infinitely more luminous , to that Eternal Day , which he now enjoys in Glory. *Ego feci*, therefore may the Virgin say with Justice, *ut oriretur in Calis Lumen indeficiens.*
And

And if at present, this Divine Sun, tho' under the Cloud of the Eucharistical Accidents, ceases not to enlighten our Earthly *Ierusalem* beneath, little less than he do's the Heavenly one above, where he is seen unvail'd and face to face; who are we beholding to, for this immense favour, but to his glorious Mother? From her was borrow'd that most pure Flesh, which is given us for food, and that most pretious Blood, which is given us to drink: And therefore, for the great share she her self has in that sumptuous Banquet of the divine Eucharist, she may also justly invite us to it, as a Banquet of her own preparing for us, *Venite, comedite Panem meum, & bibite vinum quod miscui vobis.* Prov. 9. 5. Come, and Eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine, which I have prepared for you. And so, if we discourse throughout all the rest, we shall clearly see, that as many as are the Blessings, and favours which we have either receiv'd from *Christ* or do enjoy in *Christ*, so many and no fewer are the Debts and Obligations we have contracted with the *Virgin Mary*. Q 3 §. II.

§. II.

ANd this likewise ought to be esteem'd so much the more, because she was not only the material Cause of all our Blessings, but she was also the moral Cause of them. For, as we have observed once before, she did not conceive *Christ*, in the manner of other Mothers, without knowing him before-hand. For she knew him perfectly, and desired him preferably to Thousands and Thousands of others; and in him she also knew and desired all that Good which was to flow from him unto us. Who therefore can sufficiently comprehend the infinite Obligations we have unto her upon this account? If that most happy Mother of the great Leader of the people of Israel, *Moyfes*, could have foreseen the many great advantages, which that Son of hers was to bring unto his afflicted People, when being grown up to Man's Estate he was to prove, as it were, a God of Revenge unto *Pharao*, and a God of Safety unto Israel; And in this
view

view she had concealed him with so much hazard, nursed him with so much care, brought him up with so much tenderneſs and Affection, always bearing this lively imprinted in her Mind, that she was ſaving a Saviour unto her people: What acknowledgments could that People ever have made unto ſuch a Mother, which had not been ſtill ſhort of the Benefits receiv'd? Again, Let us ſuppoſe that this glorious Mother had lived to ſee the Jewish People under the government of *Salomon*, in full poſſeſſion of the Land of Promise, enjoying a moſt profound Peace among themſelves, and with their Neighbours on all ſides. If at that time, that innumerable People overwhelmed, as I may ſay, with Joy for the happy ſtate they were in, ſhould look back a little, to compare their preſent flourishing condition, with that of their Forefathers in the cruel Slavery of Egypt; to take a view of that forty years Journey, mark'd out with more Prodigies than Foot-ſteps, thoſe Nights ſo profoundly dark to others, made lightſom to them,

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them, to direct them in their way; the Seas open'd to give them passage, and closed again to swallow up their Enemies; The hardest Rocks soften'd for their Refreshment, and the softest Dew harden'd for their food: Whole Armies defeated at their very appearance; Cities beaten down to the ground, Kingdoms taken, Kings made Tributary, whole Provinces subdued and brought into Slavery: And that all this was owing to *Moyfes*, and *Moyfes* to Her. What an Object of Love and admiration would not this incomparable Woman have been, in that supposition to all that flourishing People, and of Envy to all other Mothers? With what loud Acclamations of Joy, and Thanksgiving would not they have bless'd for Ever that Womb, which gave unto *Israel* so great a Deliverer from their former Slavery? Those Hands which hid him from the Indignation of *Pharao*? Those Breasts that gave him suck? Again, all those Wonders and Prodigies which were wrought by *Moyfes* himself, in favour of his People, would not they all have been look'd upon as so many Debts,

Debts , and Obligations owing to that Mother , who had given them such a Son , and in him all their Happiness ? The Comparison seems to be just : and yet it is as far from expressing the real Truth , as *Palestine* is from Heaven. No ! I never hope to comprehend the Sum of my Obligations to Thee , O my Sovereign Benefactress , till from the shades of Death , I arrive by Thy favour , to the Regions of the Living. Then indeed , at the first setting my foot upon that happy Threshold , and turning back to measure with my Eye, the immense distance there is between Sin and Grace , the dangers I have escaped, and the favours I have received , I shall see every Article of my Accounts clearly stated , and quickly comprehend the Sum total of my Debt. And truly , if the Virgin had been, I do not say, the Cause of our Salvation , but barely the Occasion of it , still our Hearts would be too narrow-bounded , ever to be able to acknowledge our Obligations to her , even upon that account. What shall we say then , when she was truly

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truly the Cause of it , when she effectually desired it , and not only desired it , but even hasten'd it with her fervent Sighs and Prayers ? We must e'en despair ever to return her Thanks equal to these Favours. And yet , according to *Richard of Saint Victor* , it is actually so ; * *Omnium salutem desideravit , quasivit , obtinuit, imò & salus Omnium per ipsam facta est : Vnde & mundi salus dicta est.* She desired the Salvation of all , She fought it , She obtain'd it , Nay , it was even Effected by her means : And therefore She is call'd the Safety of the World.

§. III.

BUT hitherto I have only proved that the Virgin has Equivalently, or Virtually , given Us all things, in giving us *Iesus Christ , qui est Omnis Omnia* : And yet it is certain, that all the Holy Fathers aim at a great deal more than this , when with one voice they all proclaim her , the Repairer of our Losses, the Mediatrix between God and Man, and

* *Rich. à S. Viç. in Cant. c. 26.*

and the Channel of all those Graces, of which *Christ* alone is the Source. They mean, no doubt, to signify unto us, that She not only gave us all things at once, and virtually in the manner above-said, but that She still continues to give us all things even actually, by concurring to every particular Grace, which the divine Mercy bestows upon us through the Merits of *Christ*, and upon his account. And because the Understanding of a Truth of this Nature, is to Understand a Truth of the highest importance, 'twill not be amiss to establish it upon some more solid Bottom, than may possibly appear at first Sight. This I shall endeavour to do, by tracing up, as high as possible, the Sources of this noble *Ganges*, which flowing from the Paradise of *Mary's* bountiful Heart, enriches the whole surface of the Earth with its golden Streams. These Sources are chiefly two; I mean, a double Merit which the Virgin has contracted with the Divine Mercy: The One in the Incarnation of *Christ*, the other in his Passion.

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As to the first, it is to be observed that Almighty God, tho' so rich in Mercy, as the Apostle describes him, *Dives in Misericordia*, yet had not in all his Exchequer any one Mercy, which, according to our limited Notion of things, was compleat and entire, but wanted, as I may say, one half of its perfection; For, as the Angelical Doctor teaches, There are two parts which compose this Excellent Virtue, by way of Body and Soul. The first, which is, as it were, the Body of it, is the feeling of other people's Misery: The other, which may be called the Soul, is the Relieving of it. Almighty God indeed possessed this second Prerogative with Infinite Excess, and therefore was never wanting to succour Mankind in all his Necessities and Afflictions, with all the tenderness of a loving Father; But he did not possess the first; and consequently, properly speaking, he could not have that, which we call Compassion of Mens Miseries. *Tristari anim de alterius miseria non competit Deo, sed repellere miseriam alterius hoc maxime competit.* * Whence our imperfect

* S. Thom. 1. p. q. 21. a. 3.

way of Understanding seem'd to apprehend something of I know not what defect, or imperfection in the sovereign Mercy of God, whilst we conceiv'd it indeed to be infinitely good, infinitely kind and bountiful, but still without any Compassion of our Evils. The Virgin stept in; She clothed the Divine Word with humane Flesh, and by making him Passible, as we all know, She made him also Compassionate. 'Twas but fitting therefore, that to such a Mother who had given unto the Divine Mercy its perfect accomplishment out of her own stock, some valuable Compensation should be made by way of an Equivalent. And what was this? The most proper indeed that could be devised, viz. That Almighty God should communicate unto the Mercy of the Virgin Mary, as much of his Power to help us, as She had conferred to the Divine Mercy of her Tenderness to have Compassion of us. And this is the Recompence She receiv'd. *Soror nostra parva est; & Vbera non habet.* Cant. 8. *Our Sister is little; and she has no Breasts:* This lovely Vir-

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gin,

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gin, says the Divine Mercy, is not yet come to her full growth; *Parva est*; She is little. Her Heart indeed is wide enough to take in all the Sinners of the World, within the boundless extent of her tender Compassion: But She has not yet Breasts sufficient to give them Milk. *Vbera non habet*. Her Power to relieve them is not Equal to her compassionate Affection for them. What therefore must be done? Let her make an Exchange with *Christ*. She shall give him some of her Compassion, and He shall communicate to Her some of his Power. And thus both *Christ* and the Virgin shall become perfectly Merciful, each in their degree, by perfectly possessing not only the Affection, but also the Effect of so noble a Virtue; *Christ* as the Head, the Virgin as the Neck; *Christ* as the Fountain, the Virgin as the Channel; *Christ* as the Author, and the Virgin as his Helper. In this business, if we take notice, the Divine Wisdom has observed something of a proportion not unlike unto that

that which was observ'd in the Terrestrial Paradise. There, Almighty God took one of Adam's Ribs, and filled the place up with flesh: And of the Rib which he had taken from Adam, he built a Woman. *Tulit Deus unam de costis Ada, & replevit Carnem pro eâ: & adificavit costam quam tulerat de Adam in mulierem.* Gen. 2. 21. Admire the Mystery. In the formation of Eve, a Rib is taken out of Adam's side, and flesh is put in the stead of it: Strength is borrow'd from him, and Weakness is return'd him for it. On the contrary, in the formation of Christ, Flesh is borrow'd from the Virgin, and a Rib, as I may say, is restored her for it. That is, Weakness is taken from her, and Strength or Power is given her instead of it; A God becomes weak, and a Woman is made almost Omnipotent: The Increated Mercy receives the Affection of Compassion, and the Created Mercy receives the Effect and Power of succouring. So that, as it was said there, *Tulit costam & replevit Carnem pro eâ*: He took out a Rib, and filled up flesh in the

place of it : so we may also say here , by a wonderful Antithesis , *Tulit Carnem, & replevit Costam pro ea.* He took away flesh , and restored a Rib in lieu of it. The Word Incarnate did not borrow any Power of the Virgin , but only Weakness : and for this Weakness which he took from her , he generously returned her a large share of his own Power. And this is exactly the stile of our Liberal God, never to let himself be out-done in Liberality by any of his Creatures. Queen *Saba* brought Presents to King *Salomon* so new , and so precious , that all *Ierusalem* was fill'd with Admiration at the sight of them. *Non fuerunt Aromata talia ut hac quæ dedit Regina Saba Regi Salomoni.* 2. Paralipom.⁹ 9. Never were such sweet Perfumes seen before , as were those which Queen *Saba* gave to King *Salomon*. But then , for the rarity of those extraordinary Presents which she left behind her , she carry'd away with her a great many more, and of much greater value, which King *Salomon* gave her at her returning home. Nay, he gave her every thing that she desired.

Rex

Rex Salomon dedit Regina Saba cuncta quæ voluit, & multo plura quàm attulerat ad eum. So, our great Queen of Heaven gave unto her Divine *Salomon* Presents so rare and so foreign, that till then the like had never been seen before, in the Heavenly *Ierusalem*: Presents, which if he wanted, it was only to bring to Effect that great Work of Mercy which he had undertaken, of the Redemption of Mankind. She invironed him with Flesh, She fill'd him with Compassion, She render'd him in all Things like unto those very Objects of his Mercy, on whom he designed to bestow it. *Debuit per omnia fratribus assimilari, ut misericors fieret.* Hebr. 2. But at the same time, She receiv'd much greater Gifts than what She brought, *Multò plura quàm attulerat ad eum.* Because, for what She contributed of her own to the Divine Heart, in giving him the Affections of Mercy, She receiv'd from him the Arbitrary disposition of all the Effects which were to redound unto us from that same Mercy. And behold here the first Source of that Univer-

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fal Liberality in the Virgin *Mary*, towards all Mankind, viz. The Merit She has contracted with the Mercies of our Lord *Iesus Christ* in his Incarnation.

Let us now inquire into the second Source, which is another Merit She has contracted with the same in his Passion. In that doleful Tragedy, which was acted before innumerable Multitudes of People, upon the most opprobrious Theatre of Mount Calvary, and which ended in the bitter Death of a God, the Virgin was not barely a Spectatress at the foot of the Cross: She was truly and properly an Actress. But how can this be, and in what manner, if it be true that *Christ* compleated that Work alone, and without the help of any one? *Torcular calcavi solus. Isa. 63. 3. I have trodden the Wine-press alone.* 'Twas thus. That only Son, who sacrificed himself as a Victim for the whole World, upon the Altar of the Cross, was no less the true Son of the Virgin *Mary*, than he was the true Son of God the Father. Wherefore as the Eternal Father, for his own glory,
and

and for the safety of Man, deliver'd up this his only begotten Son unto Death; so *Mary* did the same, and for the same Ends, viz. for the glory of the Eternal Father, and for the Salvation of Mankind. For, as *St. Bernard* says, in an Extasy of admiration at what they had both done for us. * *Vt servum redimerent communem filium tradiderunt.* To redeem a Slave, they deliver'd up their common Son. And certainly if the Eternal Word required the Virgin's express Consent, before he would begin to live within her most Chast Womb, it is highly probable that he would never chuse to dye, especially a Death so infamous as was that of the Cross, without having first obtain'd her Consent. And therefore, that Leave which *Christ* took of the Virgin, before his Passion, was not a bare Ceremonious taking of Leave, but rather a positive Consent on the Virgin's side, for him to lay down his Life; which, as it was truly the life of a Son, so it did, in some manner, belong also to the Mother. And because

* *Bern. l. 1. serm. 51. c. 4.*

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the Virgin , both then and much more afterwards at the foot of the Cross , offered up that part of the Divine Victim of *Christ* our Lord which belong'd to Her , and offered it with so much Readiness and Constancy of mind , that had such been the Will and pleasure of the Eternal Father, She her self had sacrificed him with her own Hands , and with Courage more than humane, had pierced her own very Soul through the Body of her dearest Son : For this Reason , I say , and in recompence for such unheard of Generosity , She was admitted to share in the Application of the Merits of this great Sacrifice , and to be an Instrument to the Divine Mercy for the Execution of all those other Favours and Blessings which were designed for Man , as She had been already in this , which was by far the greatest of all. And this is what no body can reasonably call into question. For that Readiness of Will which *Abraham* shewed to offer up his innocent and Only *Isaac* , as an Holocaust unto God upon the Mountain , in Obedience to the Divine Command,

Command, he receiv'd no less a Reward than to be constituted and proclaim'd the Father of all future Believers. Hear, and admire with what solemn Terms the Patent of this his singular Priviledge is worded.

Quia fecisti rem hanc, & non pepercisti
Vnigenito filio tuo propter me, benedicam
tibi, & multiplicabo semen tuum sicut
stellas Cœli, & sicut arenam quæ est in
litore Maris. Gen. 22. 16. Because
 thou hast done this thing, and hast not
 spared thine only son for my sake, there-
 fore I will bless Thee, and multiply thy
 seed as the stars of the Heaven, and as
 the sand which is upon the Sea shore.
 Could any thing be said more glorious
 to *Abraham* than this, tho' he had of-
 fer'd up the life not of one Son only,
 but of as many Sons as were promi-
 sed him in that numerous Posterity?
 Judge therefore what high expres-
 sions the Divine Mercy must have
 used towards the *Virgin Mary*, when
 with such undaunted Courage, She
 consecrated her only begotten Son
 to the glory of the Eternal Father,
 and offer'd for the Redemption of
 Mankind that pretious life, which
 alone was infinitely more valuable
 than

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than the life , not of an *Isaac* only, but of all those together for whom it was offered. *Because thou hast done this thing* , must the Eternal Father doubtless have said unto Her , *And hast not spared thy only begotten Son for my sake* , therefore there shall be nothing which I will not do for Thee. Thou having made my Divine Will , in contradiction to the sentiments of Nature , the only Rule of thy Affections , hast offer'd unto Sacrifice thy dearly beloved , and only Son : Behold therefore , that in recompence for this generous Act, I will give Thee a numberless Posterity of Chosen People : I will constitute Thee Mother of the Living : Thou shalt have in thy keeping the Treasury of my Liberalities: Thou shalt dispense all my Graces, Thou shalt direct my Justice ; in a word , Thou shalt have the sovereign Command over my Heart. My Clemency , which hitherto has never acknowledged any other Law than that of my own Will , from henceforward shall be subject to the Law of thy Tongue ; it being fitting that I should bestow as many Blessings

Blessings and favours upon the Earth, as it shall seem good to Thee to demand for them in Heaven. Thus, I conceive, the Eternal Father must have spoken to the glorious Virgin; and thus I find it exactly written without the least alteration, in the front of the high Encomiums of this our great and powerful Advocate, mention'd in the Book of Proverbs: *Lex Clementia in lingua ejus.* c. 31. 26. *The Law of Clemency, of Grace, and of Mercy, is in her Tongue:* that all may know, that as much as *Christ* can do with the command of his Voice, so much and no less the Virgin can do, with the Voice of her Prayers. *Quod Deus imperio, tu prece Virgo potes.* And that She, by her Intercession, concurs to all those Effects and Acts of Mercy towards Men, of which *Christ* alone is the true principal Cause, in virtue of his infinite Merits. Let no one believe what I have said, if I have advanced any thing in Commendation of *Mary*, which goes but a thought beyond her Dignity. But, if any Excellency, any Prerogative whatsoever, not only do's not exceed,

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exceed , but rather falls immensely short of the eminent Degree She possesses of Mother of God ; then let no body scruple to believe , that the Salvation of Mankind is granted to her Prayers *de Congruo* ; or by congruity of Reason , which *de Condigno* , and in rigour of Justice , is only owing to the Blood of the Redeemer. Let them believe that 'twas no Hyperbolical Amplification in Saint Bernard , to say ; *Sic est voluntas ejus qui omnia nos habere voluit per Mariam.* * Such was his Will, who would have us to receive all Things through Mary's hands. Let them believe the humble Virgin her self, who certainly never intended to exaggerate , when She told her beloved Saint Brigid, that as Adam and Eve had sold the World for an Apple, so Christ and her self had redeem'd it, as it were , with one Heart. *Sicut Adam & Eva vendiderunt mundum pro pomo , sic Christus & Ego redemimus quasi uno corde.* And thus , if I am not mistaken , we have sufficiently discover'd the never-failing Vein of Mary's great Power to help us in all our Necessities. §.IV.

* S. Bern. Serm. de Nat. Virg.

§. IV.

BUt now, who shall be able to express that Excess of Affection and good Will towards us, with which She made use of this Power? It cannot be doubted but the Virgin sees all our Wants and Necessities *In Verbo*, in the divine Word, as in a most clear and spotless Mirror. For if Almighty God makes them known to our Gardian Angels, to the End they may help us in them, according to their Commission, it cannot be supposed that he should keep them secret from his own Mother, to whom he has recommended the Safety of all Mankind much more, than he has ever recommended to any Angel the Safety of any one in particular. On the other hand, if She knows all our Necessities and sees them so clearly, who will be so rash as to think that at the sight of so much Misery, in Creatures so helpless of themselves, She is not moved to Compassion, and do's not immediately apply her self to her Divine Son, to
S implore

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implore his Mercy for them , and to obtain a speedy Relief to all their Miseries ; Especially since asking and obtaining , in the Virgin , is but one and the same Thing ? To imagine any such thing , would be to suppose in the Virgin a Heart towards her Children , such as is not seen even in the fiercest Tiger. And I am persuaded , that if the Virgin could look on unconcern'd, and see Men running headlong into Hell , without stepping in between them and that fatal Precipice, *Salomon* wou'd pronounce the same Sentence upon her , as he did formerly upon that other unnatural Woman , and pretended Mother ; that She was not that Mother She pretended to be, but rather a Step-mother , and a meer Stranger to us. And therefore as *St. Epiphanius* says with Truth, that *Mary* is all Eyes to see our Miseries, we may very well add, that She is all Heart to compassionate them , and all Hands to Relieve them. Here I wish I could lay before your Eyes in one general View , and as it were in a Map , all the Favours, Graces and Blessings which the Virgin

gin has distributed throughout the whole World, at all times, in all places, upon people of all ages, of all Ranks and conditions, from the highest to the lowest; I am sure there is not that Monster of Ingratitude so black, on this side of Hell, which would not yield the Victory at the sight of so much Love, and throw himself at the feet of this glorious Conquerour of Hearts. We may say with Truth, that, as the *Via Lactea* in the Heavens is nothing else, but a long Track of so many different Stars, which being so numerous and so thick together, make up that luminous Path, which is therefore called *The Milky way*; so the Life of every Man is a continued Series of *Mary's* Liberalities towards him; which by the great number of Graces she is always supplying him withall, so frequent, and so close one upon the other, mark out unto him that lightsom Path to Salvation, in which, unless he be wilfully blind, he cannot miss his way. Of this great Liberality, and Inclination in *Mary* to do us good, we have the authentick

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Testimonies of all the Nations under the Sun ; Which by the Multitude of their Temples dedicated to her Honour , their Assiduity in her service , their Fervour and Constancy in their humble Addresses to her in all their wants , either Spiritual or Corporal , have ever professed to acknowledge Her for the Mediatrix of all heavenly Favours. Yet it must still be own'd that all the Acknowledgments they can make , will never be equal to the smallest part of their real Obligations ; For the dark Night of this mortal Life will not permit us to discover any more of *Mary's* Benevolence towards us , than what falls under the perception of our feeble Senses. But a Day will come , when the bright Sun of Justice will shine upon us in full Glory : Then indeed , in that Meridian of Charity , each one astonish'd at his past Ignorance , will cry out through the Excess of his Joy and gratitude, *Antecedebat me ista sapientia , & Ego ignorabam quoniam horum omnium Mater est.* Sap. 7. 12. I did not make one step during my whole Pilgrimage in this place of Bannishment ,

ment , but this bountiful Mother was walking before me and pointing me out the way with her Graces : And I , in the mean time , was equally Ignorant both of the greatness of her Love , and of the multiplicity of the Favours , which through this Love she was continually bestowing upon me. *Et Ignorabam quoniam horum omnium Mater est.* In a word , I did not know that she was the Mother of all my Happiness.

If the Earth were transparent , and had Eyes on every side , to see what passes within its own Bowels , how would it be surpris'd at the Beneficence of the Sea towards it , in supplying it with Waters , and Moisture necessary for all its productions ? 'Twould see that the Rains which fall from the Clouds to refresh it , are the smallest part of those Waters , which it receives originally from the Sea. For all those Showers , tho' never so frequent , are nothing in a manner , in comparison of those other secret Veins and hidden Channels , whereby the Sea is continually sending into the very Bowels of it new supplies of Waters ,

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in order to fertilize it. 'Twould see that there is not any one part of it self, which is not beholding to the Sea for whatever Moisture it has, and consequently for its own Fecundity and Life-giving Vigour. 'Twould see that the Sea is so Ingenious, as I may say, to insinuate it self into every part of it high and low, that, rather than any should want the common benefit, it finds ways to convey its Waters, contrary to their natural Gravity, up to the Tops of the highest Mountains. Thus much would the Earth see, if it had Eyes, and were, as I said, Diaphanous. But O! How much more should we all discover of *Mary's* Liberalities towards us, if far the greatest part of them, both as to Number and Excellency, were not kept behind the Curtain, for a better Day in Heaven, and concealed from our dull and heavy Senses, as incapable to give us a faithful account of them! We should see in an instant, that all those signal Victories which were gain'd heretofore through the visible Protection of the Virgin *Mary*, by *Heracles*

over

over the *Persians*, by *Narsethes* over the *Goths*, by *Zemifces* over the *Bulgarians*, by *Pelagius* over the *Arabians*, by the *Portughefe* over the people of *Angola*, by *Alphonfus* over the *Moors*, and by the *Austrians* over the *Turkish Navy*; We should fee, I fay, that all thofe Victories and many more obtain'd by the open Affiftance of *Mary*, if compared to innumerable other hidden ones, wherein She her felf engages with our Infernal Enemies, and conquers them for us, are no more than a fmall Battalion in comparifon of a great Army. We should fee that all thofe particular Favours fo often receiv'd and acknowledg'd by the Faithful, as coming from the Virgin's hands in a vifible manner; that Affiftance in fo many dangers; that Health recovered among fo many Difcafes; that Life preferv'd amidft fo many Deaths, tho' authentically attested by numberlefs Presents, and tokens of Thanks hanging up in every one of her Churches, are but few drops of the Virgin's Liberality, in comparifon of thofe Showers of hidden Bleffings, She is continually pouring down

down upon us , which we know nothing of. In a word , we should see that there is no part of the Church , tho' never so remote, which does not partake of the Favours of this Liberal Queen of Heaven : She knows how to penetrate into the Hearts of all; She softens the hardest, Waters the driest , Cultivates the wildest, fertilizes the most barren: infuse, upon the highest Tops of the proudest Mountains , I mean those haughty Souls, who can scarce bend a Knee to beg her Assistance , She often drops her Favours , tho' undemanded and undeserv'd; and from those very Rocks of harden'd and impenitent Hearts , She strikes out Floods of bitter Tears , sincere Devotion, and hearty Repentance. These are the delightful Objects we should behold , if the Sum of all our Debts to the Virgin *Mary* were laid before our Eyes. Debts so many and so great , that if all the Inhabitants of the Earth should joyn together Hearts and Hands , to raise unto the Virgin , for a perpetual Monument of their Gratitude , the greatest and richest Temple , that

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Art and Industry could contrive; Yet this, tho' a very just Tribute of their acknowledgment, would be but a scanty Return for all that is due, and, as I may say, a meer Cypher on the side of their Credit, in respect of the immense Sum of their Debt on the other side. But since so clear a sight is not to be hoped for, in the Obscurity of this mortal Life, Let our Faith supply the want of it; And in the mean time, Let us honour that powerful Arm, from which we receive so many visible Favours, and that still more which bestows upon us so many invisible ones; and yield up our Hearts into those bountiful Hands of the Virgin Mary, into which Almighty God has deposited the whole Treasury of his Mercies.

C H A P. VI.

The sixth motive of Devotion to the Bd. Virgin, is the great Love She has for us.

§. I.

That which most of all enhances a Gift, is the Love and Affection of
of

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of the Giver. Without this, the noblest Gift whatsoever is like a Body without a Soul; for, as a dead Body has neither motion, nor principle of motion in it, so a Gift which is not animated with Love, has no power to move us to a return of Love. He that barely gives, whatever he gives, gives but a part, and that a slender one too of what he possesses: But he that Loves, gives all, by giving himself. Whence a bare Liberality, a Favour, a good Turn may be repay'd with Equality in the same kind, and by the Hand only without the Heart; But Love and Friendship can never be sufficiently requited but with the Heart. Since therefore we are so strictly obliged to honour and serve the *Virigin Mary*, upon the account of so many Favours and Blessings, which are continually flowing from her Breast into ours, what Affections of Love and Devotion ought not we to conceive towards Her, for that special Act, by which She adds to all her Favours, the highest value they are capable of, I mean her Love? I confess, that to express

press the Love of *Mary* towards us, my Pen meets with the same difficulty as the Painter's Pencil do's, to express the Nature and Activity of Fire : Every stroke and every Colour is too dull , for so lively a Thing. However I hope to give you something of an imperfect draught of that Celestial Fire which burns within *Mary's* Breast, if I represent unto you her Heart so disposed to be inflam'd upon all Occasions in our behalf , that on what side soever She turns her Eyes , whether upon her self , or upon us , or upon Almighty God, she still gathers from every Object new flames of Love : in this not unlike unto the Phoenix, to whom every thing that is about him , even his own Feathers , his Nest, and the Sun , all jointly concur to set him on fire.

§. II.

ANd first, if She looks upon her self, She sees her self constituted and proclaim'd our Mother, by a most solemn publick Act, from the Throne of the Cross. So that,
when

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when She reflects that the last Word her dying Son spoke unto her, were these, *Mulier, ecce filius tuus.* Joan. 19. 26. *Woman, behold thy Son:* and that this was his last Will and Testament, and the only thing he had to recommend unto her, how is it possible She should not be moved to love us with the greatest tenderness of Affection? For first, Observe that *Christ* in this his last Will and Testament, did not leave the Virgin unto his beloved Disciple *St. Iohn*, as his beloved, but as his Disciple: *Dicit Discipulo, Ecce Mater tua.* Joan. 19. 27. *He said unto his Disciple, Behold thy Mother.* And consequently he did not leave her unto him, as a private Legacy made to him alone, but as a general Inheritance, which was equally to belong to all those who in quality of faithful Disciples, were to adhere unto *Christ* and to follow him. And therefore when Saint *Iohn* took possession of her, 'twas not in his own private Name and quality of *Christ's* peculiarly beloved, but in his publick quality of Disciple, and as it were, in the name of all the Faithful.

Faithful. *Et ex illâ horâ accepit eam Discipulus in suâ* Joa. 19. 27. * And from that hour the Disciple took her, for his own Mother. Observe again that Christ from the Cross did not leave the Virgin unto us as a sovereign Lady, to rule over us as her Subjects, but as a Mother to take care of us as her Children. Had he only said; Woman, be thou with thy Presence, the support of this World, which, otherwise through my Absence, will in a short time run to Ruin; the Presence of the Virgin, her Attention, her Assistance, her Favours had been more than sufficient to answer this End. But when he said, Be thou a Mother to them: then the Case was quite otherwise. To comply with the Office of a Mother, Favours alone will not do; There must be Love and Affection in the case. And therefore, tho' the Law of Charity had not been so universally imposed upon all Men as it is, yet in my opinion, 'twould oblige the Virgin in respect of us in a particular manner, for

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the Reason now alledged, of her being proclaim'd our Mother. So likewise, if at that time the Virgin had not found within her self those Bowels of Tenderness and Compassion towards us, so necessary to sustain the Character imposed upon her of Universal Mother of the Church, it had been not only Reasonable and convenient, but even a part of Justice in Almighty God, to have communicated those Affections to her. When *Salomon* was design'd by Almighty God to Rule over his chosen People of *Israel*, he had a Heart given him, as the Scripture phrases it, as wide as the Sea Shore, to the end he might worthily fill so great a Character, and govern that numerous People like that great King he was design'd to be. In the same manner, that *Mary* might be a worthy Mother to the whole Multitude of the Faithful, infinitely more numerous than the People of *Israel*, 'twas necessary She should have a Heart wider than the very Heavens, to embrace them all with an Affection proportionable to her Quality of Universal Mother.

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This is what cannot be doubted of. Nature her self never makes Mothers, not even among the fiercest Tigers, without instilling into their Breasts a proportionable Love for their Young. And shall we think that Grace can be so deficient in a point of this Concern, as to suffer a Mother to be without any Love at all for her Children? Rather on the contrary, the Virgin was already disposed to this extraordinary Tenderness for us, by *Christ* our Lord, even from the time that he chose her to be his own Mother. 'Tis well known to Physicians, how through the milky Veins it is very easy not only for the Qualities of the Nurse to pass into the Child, but also for those of the Child to be convey'd into the Nurse; tho' indeed the bad ones are generally more apt to be thus convey'd than the good ones. Whence it hath sometimes happened that a Child secretly infected with some contagious Distemper, has communicated the same Infection to the Nurse that gave it Suck. However if this be true, what shall we say of the Infant *Iesus*? Can we

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think that he was not infinitely more disposed to transfuse his own Sanctifying Qualities, into the Soul of his Blessed Mother and only Nurse, than other Children are to transmit their infectious Qualities barely into the Body of those who give them their first Milk? For my part, I imagine that the very first instant, in which the Virgin apply'd unto her sacred Breasts, that glowing Furnace of Charity, *Radios igneos exsufflantem Eccl. 43. 4. breathing forth Rays of Fire*, I mean, the Heart of her Divine *Iesus*, was more than sufficient to inflame her with a most ardent Zeal for our good; so that, from that moment, we may say that She was already ripe for that important Charge, which in due time was afterwards to be laid upon her, of being a tender Mother to us all. For how is it possible She should approach so near to that scorching Sun of Charity, who loved us with an infinite Love, and not conceive within her self immense Heats of ardent Love towards us? Behold therefore how it is true, that if the Virgin *Mary* looks upon her self, She

She cannot but find wherewithal to love us with Affections of Charity beyond all Expression.

§. III.

BUt if the Virgin should turn her Eyes from her self, where She finds so many Motives to love us, to fix them upon us; we might justly apprehend that finding nothing in us to deserve her Affections, that noble Flame might come to dye, and her Love towards us be totally extinguish'd. Quite contrary. This very Thing it self is one great part of our Happiness; since our very Demerits, and the want of Motives in us to deserve her Love, concur in great measure to make us more worthy Objects of it. 'Tis a general Observation, that Mothers are more loving and fond of their Children, than Fathers commonly are: Of which no better Reason, in my opinion, can be given, than because the bearing of Children, the being deliver'd of them, and the Nursing and bringing them up, cost the Mothers infinitely more Trouble and

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Pain,

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Pain, by that common Rule, by which in all other Circumstances, that is generally most esteem'd and beloved which is dearest bought. According to this way of arguing, it follows that we must be certainly very dear unto the Virgin Mary, since She became our Mother, and We her Children, at the foot of the Cross, in the midst of a Sea of Sorrows, Sufferings and Grief. The first begotten of this most beautiful Rachel, the Saviour, not of an Egypt only, but of the whole World, came into this World whilst his Blessed Mother was wholly absorpt in a Paradise of Joys and Delight. But when She was to become the Mother of all the other Brethren of Christ, then indeed the Scene was changed. Those Labours and Pains, which She was singularly freed from, upon the account of her Virginity, and the Dignity of her Son, in her first most happy Child-birth, were multiply'd in her suffering Soul to the Thousandfold, in her second. For her to become our Mother, She was obliged to cross over a Gulf of such unheard of Sorrows and interior

Sufferings,

Sufferings , that to compare them
with the Torments of other Martyrs,
would be to compare the small in-
conveniencies of a short Navigation,
with the dreadful Horrors of an
unavoidable Shipwrack. * Other Mar-
tyrs suffered Martyrdom in their
Bodies ; but the Virgin suffer'd hers
in her Soul. *Tuum ipsius animam doloris*
gladius pertransivit. The sword of grief
has pierced thy very Soul. And who is
there that do's not know that the
Soul is much better disposed for
suffering than the Body ? Since the
Body without the Soul can feel no
pain at all : Whereas it is certain
that the Soul without the Body can
suffer even to Excess. Besides , in
other Martyrs the Love it self they
were inflamed with , was a Leni-
tive so powerful to assuage the vio-
lence of their Torments , that often
times under the sharpest Scourges,
upon Crosses, Gibbers , and Wracks,
and in the midst of scorching Flames,
the Martyr that suffered , and the
Martyr that spoke to the Strangers
by , did not seem to be the same.
et sicut unusquisque sua passio est.
Et alij Patres.

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Man, *Tanquam alius esset qui torqueretur, alius qui loqueretur* : as was said of St. Laurence, and might be said in proportion of all the other Martyrs. But in the Virgin it was quite the contrary. Her Love was so far from being a sovereign Balsam to heal up the Wounds of her Heart, that it was rather like so much Vinegar and Gall pour'd upon them, on purpose to increase the smart of them, and to fret them the more. And thus, as Cruelty alone was the Measure of the Martyrs Torments; so nothing but Love was the Measure of Mary's. Whence it follows, that as much as the Love of Mary surpassed the Cruelty of the Tyrants, so much her Sorrows and Sufferings surpassed all the Torments of the Martyrs. And therefore the Prophet *Jeremy*, having seen her in Prophetick spirit, at the Head of an innumerable Army of Martyrs, as the Queen of Dolours, cry'd out full of Astonishment, *Cui assimilabo Te, aut cui exequabo Te, Virgo, filia Ierusalem?* What shall I liken Thee to, or who shall I compare Thee to, O Virgin Daughter of *Ierusalem*?

And

And having as it were, taken some time to consider with himself what could come the nearest to the Truth in expressing her Sorrow, he concluded that nothing but the Depth and Wideness of the Sea, could give us any tolerable Idea of it. *Magna est velut Mare contritio tua.* Thren. 2. 13. For my part, I can only say, great Virgin, that as Thou art an Ocean of Charity, so Thou art also an Ocean of Sufferings. And the Reason of all this, is, because the Passion of the Son ought, in some manner, to be look'd upon as the Passion of the Mother, by reason of that perfect Sympathy of Hearts which passed between them, not unlike unto that, as Saint *Augustin* observes, which is between two strings of a Lute, exactly tuned to an Unison; Whereof one cannot be touch'd, but the other tho' untouch'd will answer to the same Note, not indeed so loud, but yet very distinctly. Or if you please, as the Virgin herself expressed it to St. *Brigid*. If a Person should carry one half of his Heart within his own Breast, and the other half without; it

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it would necessarily follow that whatsoever that part suffers which is without, the other which remains within must also suffer the same. So, in the same manner, because the Virgin, by a wonderful sort of Division, or rather Replication of her self, lived as much within her Son as within her self, exactly verifying the ingenious saying of Denis the Carthusian. * *Anima verius est ubi amat, quàm ubi animat.* The Soul is more where it loves, than where it lives; it necessarily follow'd that whatsoever her Divine Son suffer'd in himself, She also suffer'd within her self, and felt the smart of all those cruel Blows which were so unmercifully loaded upon him, almost as sensibly as if they had been inflicted upon her self. And all this was by a most profound design of Divine Providence. For, since it was not possible that *Christ* should meet with that Compassion which the Excess of his Sufferings deserved, either from kind Heaven (for Heaven it self had decreed he should suffer) or from ungrateful Earth, which

* *In Epist. ad Phil. c. 3. v. 3.*

which was not the least moved at his Sufferings; it seem'd necessary that a Creature should be found, who could supply for Both, by receiving within her own great Soul, a Sea of Compassion for our suffering Lord, so wide and so vast, as might be like unto that other Sea of the most bitter Passion which he himself endured. And if in effect it was only like unto it, and not exactly equal, the only Reason could be, because, to mourn with Tears of Compassion the spilling of that precious Blood to an Equality with its Worth and Merits, it was necessary that as the Blood spilt, so the Tears shed should be also absolutely Divine. In this doleful condition therefore, the Virgin stood suffering at the foot of the Cross; and tho' overwhelmed in an Abyss of Sorrows, and torn, as I may say, to pieces with the excessive pains of her second Child-birth, *Cruciabatur ut pareret*, as she appear'd in the Apocalypse, c. 12. Notwithstanding totally forgetful of her self, and of what She was suffering for us, She earnestly begg'd of Almighty God
the

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the Life of those very Children She was actually suffering so much for, with an *Addat mihi Dominus filium alterum*. Gen. 30. Grant me, Lord, the Life and Salvation of these my new begotten, who have cost me so dear: for this End, I freely offer unto you my First begotten, that is, the very Soul of my Soul. And thus indeed the Virgin, in giving up her dearly beloved Son, and her own very Soul, into the hands of his Enemies for our sakes, *Dedit dilectam animam suam in manu inimicorum ejus*. Jere. 12. 7. Made a last Effort of her Love, and did for us the utmost of what was possible for her to do. And these are the great Merits we have to challenge the Virgin's Love. Our having been the Cause of her suffering so much.

But what wonder? A Love, when it is but weak and tender, must be fed with kindness and Favours: But when it is strong, and grown to full maturity, it is best nourish'd with Sufferings and Afflictions; just as a violent blast of Wind gives new life and vigour to a great Flame, and quite puts out a little one. And therefore

therefore this Excess of suffering in the Virgin, which was so great a Motive to her to Love us, ought to be a principal Argument to us, to infer from thence the Excess of her Love. It was a wise saying, and a true one, that Friends are made in Prosperity, but only known in Adversity. For in reality there can be no greater proof of true Friendship, than Suffering. Who would not think that Quick-silver were a perfect Emblem of the truest Friendship, since it adheres to Gold so close, and follows it so inseparably every where, that contrary to its native Gravity, it will fly even through the Air in order to find it out? And yet it is certainly but a very false Friend: for tho' it follows the Gold, yet it is only so long as it do's not come near the Fire. For the Gold is no sooner put into the Crucible, but at the first feeling the smart of that fiery Trial, the Quick-silver flies away immediately and leaves his Friend to suffer alone. On the contrary, what greater proofs can we desire of Mary's most ardent Charity towards us, when we have seen it not only ne-

ver yield to the violence of so much Affliction and Suffering, but rather grow stronger in our behalf, under the oppression of such a heavy Weight. The least we can do, is to repay her with Love. For if one Love be, as it were, a Load-stone to draw on another; a Love so inured to suffering for our sakes, ought, methinks, like a Load-stone set in steel not only draw, but even violently carry away our Hearts.

§. IV.

IT must be own'd however, that notwithstanding all that we have hitherto said of *Mary's* great Charity towards us, we have not yet hit the right Mark. The true Origin of those ardent flames of Love, if we look narrowly into the matter, is neither in Her, nor in us, but in God himself. It is He, who with an almost infinite Repercussion of his own infinite Love, enkindles this great Fire in the Sanctuary of *Mary's* innocent Heart. The Sun in those parts of *Africa*, which are situated under its direct Rays, is said to have

so

so much force, as not only to set Fire to the Woods, but even to burn up the very Sands. What burning Heats must the Virgin therefore conceive within her Heart, since She is so directly situated under the strongest Rays of the Divinity, and approaches it so near?

But, the better to conceive the force of this Inference, we must further observe with *St. Thomas*, that the Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbour, are not two distinct Virtues, but only one and the same Virtue. So that, if I should compare these two Loves, to those two famous Twins, who were not only extremely like one another in the features of their Face, as it commonly falls out, but also in their Humour, Nature and whole Complexion; and, which is still more surprizing, were so constantly equal in all the same Affections of Joy and Sadness, and all the other Incidents of humane Life, that they seem'd to measure the whole Course of their Lives with one and the same Thread. This comparison might help in some man-

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ner to illustrate the Truth of St. Thomas his Assertion ; yet it would not be exactly just : Because the two Loves we speak of, tho' they may in some sense be call'd Twins and born at a Birth, yet in effect they are not really Two, but only one Born. *Idem numero est Habitus Charitatis, ex quo uterque actus elicitur.*

* It is one and the same Habit of Charity, from whence both Acts are produced. They are like the direct and reflexed Ray of one and the same Light : a Light, which tho' it has not the same Tendency, the same Direction, nor is pointed the same way, yet it has the same Efficient Cause and the same Principle. Hence it is, that as much as the Divine Love increases in us, so much the Love of our Neighbour will also increase : These two Loves being strictly commanded under one and the same individual Precept. *Mandatum habemus à Deo, ut qui diligit Deum diligat & fratrem suum* I. Joa. 4. We have a command from God, that whosoever loves God, must also love his Brother. And this is so true, that the

* S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 25. a. 1.

the Geometricians shall sooner see two strait Lines meet together in the same Center, without ever coming nearer to one another, than we shall ever see this Prodigy come to pass, of two Hearts loving God, and by that Love approaching to Him as their common Center, which at the same time, and by the very same steps shall not approach to one another by mutual Love. This being so, whoever desires to know how deep the Faithful are in the Heart of *Mary*, let him only take the Measure of her Love towards Almighty God, and he will soon discover the just Proportion of her Love to Man. If the Heart of *Mary*, now reigning in the Empyrean, be a Furnace of Divine Love *Seven times more heated*, Dan. 3. 19. than the Hearts of all the other Saints together; we may safely say, that the Love which all the Saints together have for Mankind, is but a small Flame in comparison of that great Fire which is always burning for Man in *Mary's* Breast. And this is the Rule St. *Augustin* went by, to explain her Care and Sollicitude for us.

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Sicut omnibus Sanctis est potior, ita omnibus Sanctis pro nobis est sollicitior. * As much as the Virgin surpasses all other Saints in Dignity and in the Love of God, so much, says this Saint, She surpasses them all in Care and Sollicitude for us. Just as it falls out in the Highest among the Celestial Spheres; For, as much as that supreme Sphere surpasses all the other inferiour Spheres in Height and Bulk, so much it surpasses them also in Swiftnes of Motion, with which it is always running round for the Benefit of the Earth. For my part, I wonder sometimes how our Soul is not ready to spring out of our Body, for pure excess of Joy, to see our selves so unmeasurably beloved by the great Mother of God. Wherefore if the Liberality of Mary towards us, as we have seen in the foregoing Chapter, and her excessive Charity for us, as has been proved in this, are equally ineffable and beyond all expression, what Flint must that ungrateful Heart be made of, which can

St. Aug. citatus a St. Bonav.
in specul. Mor. & V. 5.

can refuse his most cordial Thanks for so many Favours , and a small return of his Love, for so much Love in Mary?

C H A P. VII.

The Seventh Motive of Devotion to the Bd. Virgin, is, its being a Mark of Predestination.

§. I.

That fond Desire which Man naturally has to learn some Intelligence of what Fortune is like to fall to his Share , for the little space of Time he is to live upon this miserable Earth , oftentimes pushes him on to peep even into the Stars for it , sometimes criminally , always indiscreetly ; since the Stars are those profound and hidden Volumes , in which Almighty God either has never written what he seeks for , or at least not in such Characters , as may be read by mortal Eye and at this Distance. How much more advisable would it be for us, to turn this useless and dangerous Curiosity
another

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another way : by endeavouring to discover by the Light of the Gospel , and not of the Stars , what our Fortune will be , Happy or Miserable , which must be soon decided, in an approaching Eternity ? It is certain that if this grand Affair , and indeed the only one that deserves our Attention , were apprehended by us as the importance of it requires , it would cast such a wholesom Damp upon our Souls , that we should have neither Thought nor Heart for any thing else : Not unlike unto a Criminal, who with the Dice in his Hands, and condemn'd to throw for his Life , would be incapable of any other Comfort than the Hopes of a favourable Cast , or of any other Sadness and Anxiety , than the dreadful Expectation of a bad one. Then indeed the World would soon conceive how great an Account ought to be made of the true and sincere Devotion to the *Virgin Mary*; since this Devotion is unto the Faithful a most authentical Mark of undoubted Salvation and a happy Eternity.

To prove the Truth of this Opinion,

nion, I am satisfy'd it would be sufficient to bring the Authority of all those Holy Writers and Doctors who positively assert it. * However, not to stand barely to their Word for a Truth of this importance, we will, if you please, by dint of Reason and Discourse, examine the security and solidity of this Bottom, before we cast in our Anchor, especially an Anchor of so much Weight.

§. II.

I Say, therefore, that the Virgin Mary is a faithful and never-failing Prognostick of Salvation. But why should any one doubt of it, since She has ever been so from the very beginning of the World? In that first

* S. Ansel. de Laud. Virg.

S. Petr. Damia. Opusc. 32. c. 2.

Rich. l. 2. de Deip. c. 3.

S. Anton. 4. p. to. 15. c. 14.

Raynaud. in Marial.

Plebar. Stell l. 12. p. 2. c. 1.

Spinell. in Throno. c. 24.

Recupit. de sign. Prædestin.

Vide Mend. L. 2. Flor.

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first horrible Deluge, when the whole Species of Mankind was drown'd in the guilt of Sin, the first kind Ray of Comfort which broke out upon our Two unfortunate Progenitors, was, as we have observed elsewhere, the glorious Virgin *Mary*. She was the Peace-boding Rain-bow promised them by Almighty God, as a Pledge of future Serenity; and consequently we may truly say, that She was the first Token that was ever given Them since their Fall, of the Salvation of their Souls, which at that time were liable to Eternal Damnation. Nor was *Adam* ignorant of this Mystery. For, at the first hearing of that implacable Enmity and Hatred which this wonderful Woman was to profess, in the time to come, against the Serpent who had infected him and his Consort *Eve*, He immediately comprehended how sovereign an Antidote She carry'd within her Bosom, not only for his own Safety, but also for that of his whole Posterity. And therefore I look upon it to be highly probable that *Præsentia tangens, & futura prospiciens,* being

being sensible of what was present, and foreseeing what was to come, in the Name which he gave unto *Eve*, when after their Sin, he stiled her the Mother of the Living, he only pretended to represent in Figure, tho' at a very great distance from the Original, that other incomparable Woman infinitely more deserving of that Name; For, otherwise, how could he with any Colour of Truth call her the Mother of the Living, who had already given Death to all her Posterity, even before she could give them Life? We may therefore securely say, that as *Christ* was the Saviour, or the *Lamb slain* for our Redemption, from the beginning of the World, *Agnus occisus ab origine Mundi*. Apoc. 13. 9. So the Virgin was also from the very beginning, the Sign of that Salvation of which *Christ* was the Cause: And indeed a Sign the most propitious, next to the Sun of Justice himself, that ever appear'd in any of the Heavenly Spheres; and therefore it can be no wonder if the Church afterwards took Birth under the favourable Horoscope of this most fortunate

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fortunate Sign. It is certain that our Lord *Iesus Christ*, before the Church was born, as I may say, upon Mount Calvary out of the sacred Wound of his Side, had already appointed *Mary* to be the Mother of it. Nor was it without a Mystery, that in this occasion He disposed Things so, that the first to take possession of this happy Mother in the Name of all the Faithful, should just be his favourite Disciple: to signify thereby that the Virgin *Mary* should always be an Ascendent of Happiness and Safety to all the Favourites of *Christ*, whom we all know to be the Elect, or the Predestinated to Glory. Whence it will be no easy matter to express the great Power and Efficacy which the Saints and holy Doctors have always attributed to this wonderful Sign. The words of St. *Anselm* may suffice for all the rest; such is their force and Energy. *Sicut impossibile est quòd illi à quibus Virgo Maria oculos sua Misericordia avertit, salventur: ita necessarium est ut hi ad quos converterit oculos suos, pro eis advocans, justificentur, & glorificentur.*
 „ As it is impossible for those to
 „ be

„ be saved , whom the Virgin aban-
 „ dons by turning the Eyes of her
 „ Mercy from them : So it is necessa-
 „ ry that those on whom She merci-
 „ fully casts her Eyes , and takes their
 „ Cause in hand , should be first
 „ Justified upon Earth , and after-
 „ wards glorified in Heaven. „ Words
 so strong and of such main impor-
 tance , that lest they should ap-
 pear too exaggerated , it will not be
 amiss to support them with these
 others dictated by the Holy Ghost,
 and expressly apply'd by the Church
 to the Virgin. *Qui me oderunt , dili-
 gunt Mortem. Prov. 8. 36.* And on the
 contrary , *Qui me invenerit inveniet
 Vitam. ibid.* He that flies from Mary,
 meets with Death. Because he depri-
 ves himself of those Life-giving In-
 fluences which are not transmitted
 unto us , but by her means. On the
 contrary , *Whosoever shall find Mary,
 shall find Life :* for tho' the Virgin
 be not the Life , for the Life is Christ,
 yet the finding the Virgin do's not
 seem to be a different thing from
 the finding of Christ : so Efficacious
 is the Virtue which This Sign has
 receiv'd by Communication from

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That Sun. Jewellers are glad when they meet with a Sapphire; Because within the Sapphire they also find the Carbuncle, whose superiour Brightness Crowns him King over all the rest of the vulgar Jewels. In the same manner, the true Clients of *Mary* may justly rejoyce when they have found Her: Because the finding of Her is as much worth to them as the finding within Her the King of the Elect, her Divine Son Jesus. *Qui me invenerit inveniet Vitam.*

But because the touching upon a Point of so much Comfort is, unto the faithful Servants of *Mary*, like pinching the Harp upon the deepest Strings, which are always the sweetest; we will enter a little more profoundly into this Matter, and examine upon what account in particular the Virgin may be said to have so much influence upon our Salvation. These are chiefly reduced to Two; whereof one is gathered from the End of our Predestination, and the other from the Means towards the bringing it to effect.

§. III.

AS to what concerns the End of our Predestination, it is certain that the great Number of the Elect, who have had the good fortune to be separated from the unhappy Mass of the Reprobate, cannot have any nobler Employment in Heaven, than to make up a Court unto *Christ*, the First-begotten of the Eternal Father, and to make him appear among the Predestinated, as a glorious Sun, more conspicuous than all the rest together, waited upon by a numerous retinue of inferiour Stars. *Quos praecepsivit, hos & praecepsit conformes fieri imaginis filij sui; ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus.* Rom. 8. 29. Those whom he knew before, says the Apostle, he also predestinated to be made like unto his Son, that He might be the first-born among many Brethren. Now if this be true, it follows by Consequence, that as this great and happy Number of Attendants was chosen from the beginning, to form a Court unto *Christ*, so it was also chosen at the very

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same

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same time to make up a Court for *Mary*, as the Mother of that great First-born: it being well known that this Divine *Salomon*, intending to honour his Blessed Mother the most that was possible next to himself, has seated her at his right Hand, and placed her in the highest Degree, both of his Mother and of his Spouse.

Astitit Regina à dextris tuis. And because his Design is to keep her next to himself, and never to suffer her to be separated from him, his Will is, that if he be the Sun amidst so many obsequious Stars, She shall be look'd upon as the Moon: and such a Moon which has no need to stand at a distance from the Sun, to shew her Light, but rather shines so much the brighter the nearer She approaches to Him. And thus you may observe, that those Five prudent Virgins who for their Diligence and Wisdom had the happiness to be admitted to the Nuptial solemnity, came with a design to make their Court to the Bride-groom and the Bride, both under one, and to increase the Number of their common Retinue: *Exierunt obviam sponso*

et sponsa. And under that Title were receiv'd preferably to the other Five, who for their Folly and indiscretion were excluded that Company, as unfit to appear in a Court, where nothing but true Wisdom is considered: And this, to give us to Understand that the Faithful predestinated are admitted to Everlasting Bliss, first and principally for the greater Glory of the divine Bridegroom, and then as a consequence to it, for the greater Glory also of that heavenly Bride, who had the double Honour of being both his Spouse and his Mother. *Exierunt obviam sponso et sponsa*. So true it is, that all the Saints in Heaven are ordain'd for the greater Ornament not only of *Christ*, but also of *Mary*, his Virgin Mother. Let no one be surpris'd at this Proposition as too confidently advanced. Of the Prince of the Seraphims it is said in *Ezechiel*, that all the most pretious Stones were made use of only to adorn him and to set him off. *Omnis lapis pretiosus Operimentum tuum*. c. 28. 13. and then the Prophet reckons up Nine different sorts of

X 3 Jewels,

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Jewels, which in the opinion of St. Gregory, are a figure of the nine Quires, into which the Angels are distributed; as if all the inferiour Angels were only intended for Ornament and Pomp to the Highest. With how much more Reason therefore may we say of the Virgin without danger of Hyperbole, that not only the Angelical Legions but all those innumerable Multitudes of Elect, and Blessed Saints in Heaven were all designed, at least by a secondary Intention, for her Glory, to increase the Majesty of her Throne, to enlarge her Empire, to adorn her Triumph, and to fill Her Court with greater Splendour and Pomp; For, as She was the secondary Cause of our Salvation, so it was but reasonable She should also be the secondary End of our Predestination. Now if this be so, who do's not see that since all the Elect must belong to *Mary's* Court, nothing will better help us to be one Day favourably received into the Number of her thrice happy Courtiers, than to wear her Livery at present, to Obey her Will, to please her

her in all things , to gain her Favour by bearing all the Marks of one of Her domestick Servants upon Earth ; and infine to make it a chief part of our Ambition to be known to belong to Her. *Vultum tuum deprecabuntur omnes divites Plebis.* Ps. 44. The noblest and the Richest amongst the People shall be ambitious to appear before Thy Face , O glorious Virgin , and to do Homage to the Majesty thereof. And indeed who ever saw a Court formed for a great Queen , and such an one as might be agreeable to Her , without having a special regard to those whom she has any Inclination for ; or who have any particular dependence upon her ? And let no one here object to me , that the Virgin could not in any manner concur to the Election of her Clients to Glory : They being already chosen from all Eternity in the Secret Consistory of the Three divine Persons among themselves, without her knowledge or participation. For I find very grave Authors who teach us, that the Eternal Father predestinated all those whom the Son was afterwards in process of
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of Time to demand of him distinctly, and as it were by Name, according to the unlimited Profer he made him of asking and obtaining whatever he desired. *Postula à me, & dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam.* Psal. 2. *Ask of me, and I will give Thee whole Nations for Thy Inheritance,* That thus *Christ* might be acknowledged to be not barely the Steward or Administrator of the Salvation of Mankind, but the absolute Lord and Master of it, both in Heaven and upon Earth; in Heaven, by decreeing it more particularly, and upon Earth, by putting it in Execution. *Data est mihi omnis potestas in Cælo, & in Terrâ.* Matt. 28. All power is given unto me, both in Heaven and upon Earth. And if this be supposed, then I answer you thus. If the determination be left to *Christ*, and *Christ* be the Son of *Mary*, whom do you think he would beg of his Father, and offer his Merits for sooner, than for those whom he foresaw in the Abyss of his Divine Science, would from time to time be most devoted to his Virgin Mother, and be most beloved by her?

§.IV.

§. IV.

IT is manifest therefore, that the Devotion to the Bd. Virgin is wonderfully conducing to the End of our Predestination; And for the same Reason it is no less conducing to that most efficacious Means, by which we come at length to obtain that happy End, I mean her most powerful Intercession. To make this out more expeditely, I find it will be necessary to take up my proofs at a little greater Distance; since in Discourse as well as in Sailing, the shortest way is not always the nearest to the Term.

In the Tribunal of Heaven I find there is a Law in force, contrary to any we have in our Statute Books or Codes upon Earth. In these, the Law forbids Women to be Advocates, or to meddle with the Law.* Not but that a great many of them, without doubt, would be as able to carry a Cause as the best of Lawyers, but rather because it is to be

* *L. Fœmina. ff. de Reg. Jur. l. 1, ff. de Postul.*

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be apprehended they would gain them all ; it being an Advantage too too great in favour of a Cause, when to the natural or acquired Eloquence of the Tongue in the Person that speaks, is added the more persuasive Eloquence of the Eyes and Face. If Women were to plead Causes , Heaven avert that a *Helena* should appear at the Bar , to defend a Criminal or a Traitor , from the severity of the Law. That Face which once was powerful enough to set all *Asia* in a flame , I leave you to judge whether it would meet with much difficulty to turn the Scales in the Hands of a Judge , and make them fly up or down , at her pleasure , contrary to all the Laws of Nature , Reason , and Justice. And certainly it was a Scandal upon our very Nature never to be effaced, that the very first time that ever Woman put it into her Head, to persuade Man to a Thing , (and this was in the terrestrial Paradise , and even before Man became a Slave to his Passions) She so far succeeded in her rash Undertaking , that she persuaded him , contrary to his own
good

good Sense, and God's positive Command, to exchange all his Greatness and all his Happiness for an Apple. But whatever the Reasons may be to exclude Women from the Bar, it is certain, that, as in the Tribunal of Heaven such Prejudices as these are not in the least to be apprehended, so the Prohibitions we have been speaking of are not at all regarded. On the Contrary, in that otherwise impartial Court, every Thing seems to be partial in favour of the Virgin, and her Clients. There, a Woman is singularly Chosen to be our Advocate, and to plead all our Causes. And to give more Weight and Authority to her Character, it is further enacted, that this very Woman shall be the Mother of the Judge himself; to the end that where the Merits of our Cause will not be sufficient to incline him to be favourable to us, These two respectful Titles of Love and Authority, in the Person that Patronizes it, may supply for all other Defects, in our behalf.

The Virgin took Possession of this
Charitable

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Charitable Office, as soon as She became the Mother of God, and began to Exercise the first Functions of it here upon Earth, with so much Sollicitude and such ardent Zeal for our good, that it is not in my power to express it. Observe, and you will find that the Two first Miracles which *Christ* wrought upon Earth, the one to dispense with the common Laws of Grace, and the other absolutely to derogate from those of Nature, were both equally the Effect of this our great Advocate's powerful Interposition. If any one interiorly enlighten'd by Faith to Understand the Mystery, had been present to see the Virgin crossing over the Mountains of *Judea* with more than ordinary Speed, *cum festinatione*, what would he have said? This is that bright *Aurora*, doubtless would he have said, which, with the brighter Sun of Justice in her Womb, is hastening to carry the clear Day of Grace to the Precursor of the Messiah, even before its Time. 'Twas the Virgin therefore that hasten'd the Messiah thither. He came; and the moment he

he arrived, the great Baptist was Sanctified in his Mother's Womb, before his time. Again, in the Nuptial Feast of *Cana* in *Galilee*; altho' the Time was not yet come, in which *Christ* had determin'd to confirm his Doctrine by the Authentick Testimony of publick Miracles (such as he afterwards wrought so frequently, as when he even changed the Nature of the Elements, in order to effect a like Conversion in the Hearts of Men) *Nondum venit hora mea*; Joa. 2. 4. *my Hour is not yet come.* Yet such was the power of the Virgin's Intercession, that She made that happy Hour to come flying, as I may say, upon the Wings of her fervent Prayer, much sooner for the Benefit of the World, than otherwise had been designed in the ordinary Course of Providence.

And as for Heaven, who can pretend to express the force and Efficacy which the Virgin's Intercession has there? As much as the Merit and Authority of this our powerful Advocate is increased in Heaven, to what it was upon Earth, so much the Power of the Prayers which She

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puts up for us there, is also increas'd. Almighty God having in his Providence appointed the use of Prayer as the most universal Instrument for the Execution of all his Designs, has given such wonderful force to it, that a Man who puts up his humble Petition unto God by Prayer, is said to command Him; and a God who returns the Petition with a favourable Grant, is said to Obey the Voice of Man, according to that memorable Phrase of Holy Scripture, *Obediente Deo voci hominis.* Josu. 10. 14. And yet, what Man did the H. Ghost speak of, in that place? Of a *Iosue*; that is, of a Man who was yet living upon Earth, in the state and Condition of a Servant; and consequently could not presume to command Almighty God in any Thing, but at the most, call upon him, by humble Invocation and Prayer. If therefore the Bounds which Almighty God has set to the Prayers of a Just Man, be of so great an Extent, as to be reputed in a manner equivalent to a Command; how unlimited must those Bounds be, which he has set to the powerful Intercession

Intercession of his own blessed Mother? Nay rather, may not we conclude that he has set none at all? I am persuaded that the Voice of an Advocate of such unlimited Authority, pleading for us in the Court of Heaven, is look'd upon there, as little less than the Voice of a participated Omnipotence. *Quod Deus Imperio, Tu prece, Virgo, potes.* And if a God himself yields to her Prayers, who is there that can withstand their force, or hinder the Effect of them? When the Archangel Gardian of *Israel* was earnestly soliciting the Return of that People from *Persia*, where they were detain'd in Captivity, into their own *Palestine*, the Archangel Gardian of *Persia* stood up in opposition to him, in favour of *Persia*, for the space of One and Twenty Days; that is, till Almighty God had manifested his Will more clearly to them, concerning their Return. But who is there in Heaven, that can make the like Resistance to the Prayers of the Virgin Mary, as if the Will of God could then be dubious, when She has interposed her Authority? Let us put

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this Case; that not only an Arch-angel, but, if you please, all the Nine Quires of Angels and Blessed Spirits in Heaven, all the Saints of every Degree; in a word, all the Inhabitants of the Heavenly *Ierusalem*, should all joyn in one Petition to demand my Damnation, I make bold to tell you, that if *Mary* alone should stand up for me, in opposition to all Heaven, and engage to beg Mercy for me, I should look upon my self to have good security for my Salvation; * and that all that whole Torrent against me would not be strong enough to beat down this one Rampart in my Defence; such is the Trust and Confidence which I repose in her powerful Intercession; and with Reason: For, if She alone surpasses them all in Merit, it is but a very Rational Consequence that She should also surpass them all in the Power and Efficacy of Impetration. And thus, I hear her glorying of her self, *Girum Cali circumiri sola.* Eccl. 24. 8. that She is the only one in Heaven, that is always in Motion for our Assistance:

* *Suar. to. 2. in 3. p. D. 23. S. 2.*

stance: Not because the other Saints do not intercede for us, but because her Power and Authority is so eminently above theirs, that She draws them all after Her: and that so efficaciously, that if any one of them, or even all together should concur to make Opposition to what She demands, She would prevail above them all; just as the highest among the Celestial Spheres, known by the name of the *Primum Mobile*, might glory of its moving all alone for the Benefit of this lower Earth; not because the other Spheres do not also move, and for the same End; but because they conform their Motion so exactly to that of the First and Highest Sphere, that altho' they should all combine together to resist its Motion, or force it the contrary way, they would not be able to retard it in the least, much less to stop its Course, or divert it another way. What have the Clients of *Mary* therefore to fear? Nothing truly, but to lose her Protection, by abusing it. For, as long as She undertakes to protect them, their Salvation is secure.

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The Inhabitants of that part of the Netherlands, now called *Holland*, tho' the Sea about them be higher than their Houses, yet they sleep their sound Sleeps, and rest quietly in their Beds, without any further Concern: Because they trust to their high Banks made up with Earth and Stone, and strong Beams lock'd into one another with Iron, so fast, that under the Shelter of that invincible Bulwark, they hold out the most obstinate Sieges of that unruly Element, and are never frighten'd at its frequent and furious Assaults. Yet this Confidence of theirs, tho' in appearance so well ground'd, has sometimes failed them. And it is not long since the Sea breaking in suddenly upon them, has laid under Water their richest *Emporium*, with irreparable loss to the Marchands, who were Shipwreckt with all their goods, I do not say in their Harbour, but even in the very middle of their Market-place. O, how much safer is that Defence, which the Clients of *Mary* are always sure to find in her Protection! *Ego Murus*, says the Virgin of her self, *ex quo*

facta

facta sum coram eo pacem reperiens Cant.

8. 10. Since the Virgin has found that Peace and favour in the sight of God, which had been sought for in vain, for so many Ages before, She is become unto us a Wall of Defence, so strong and impregnable, that all the united Forces of Hell together shall never be able to make the least Breach in it, much less to beat it down. For my part, if God grant me this Happiness, to take my constant Refuge under the Shade of this invincible Wall, let my Infernal Enemies, armed with Malice and Rage, come upon me by Thousands, let them besiege me, let them assault me with all their Fury, I fear them not. *Gassenda*, a Lady in France no less illustrious for her Birth than for her singular Piety, was become at length so solicitous for her Nephew *Elxear*, lest through the usual Temptations and dangers of Youth, and bad Company, he should take to wrong Courses, notwithstanding the pious Education she had always endeavour'd to give him, together with that which was suitable to a Man of his Quality; that she could

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could give her self no Rest for him, Night nor Day : but was always importuning Heaven, and battering as I may say, the divine Heart with the sweet Violence of her most fervent Prayers, for his Salvation. And behold, Almighty God, who loves to be importuned (and therefore for a time seem'd to be deaf to her Prayer) at last gave her this Answer. Know, my Daughter, that I have given up Thy dear *Elzear*, to my dear Mother. Fear nothing, he is safe. Which was as much as if he had said ; What canst Thou doubt of ? If the Virgin *Mary* had Power enough to draw me, who am a God, down from Heaven unto Earth, shall not She be able, do'st Thou think, to draw up Thy Nephew from Earth unto Heaven ? *Si contra Deum fortis fuit, quanto magis contra hominem prevalebit ?* Gen. 32. 28. And so it is most certainly. The Virgin is that bright Morning Star, which invited the true Sun of Justice to follow Her upon our Horizon : And still retaining the same Inclination to favour us on all occasions, *Cito venit, serò Recedit*, She rises

rises early and sets late. She is the first to come into the Heart of a Sinner, and the last to depart from it. She has given us a Saviour, the Fruit of her own Womb. And not content with that, She makes her self like the Palm-tree, with as many steps as Branches, for us to reach at that Excellent Fruit, which She bore for our Salvation. O, that I could once be so happy, as to ascend into this Life-giving Palm-Tree, *Ascendam in Palmam*. There, I shall gather the Fruit I sigh after. *Apprehendam fructum ejus*. Can. 7. 8. And what is this Fruit, but life Everlasting? *Apprehendam vitam aeternam*. And in Effect, the holy Youth *Elzear* ascended so far into this happy Palm-Tree, that he gathered the very highest Fruits of it: For, by the Virgin's favour, he arrived to such a Degree of Perfection, as to joyn Matrimony and Virginity together, by an example which few arrive to, and which is capable of raising a holy Envy, even among the Angelical Spirits, more happy indeed by Nature than Mortal Men, but not more Chast, than those who have

Mary

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Mary for the Gardian and Protectress of their Virginity.

And thus we have seen how the Bd. Virgin belongs to the Mystery of our Predestination : first , as the End of it , and secondly , as a Means towards it ; as the End of it , in the Order of Election , and as a Means, in the Order of Execution. And thus we may also see, how much Reason we have to look upon Her as a most propitious Sign , and certain Token of Salvation. Some Authors are of Opinion , that the Moon was principally made for a Companion , as it were , to the Sun ; and that therefore when she is full of his Light, she appears like another lesser Sun; in respect of the Heavens , by her borrow'd Light , and in regard of the Earth , by her influence, and concurrence to all the productions of Nature. And to this purpose, I find written even in *Aristotle*, so many Ages ago , that, *Luna propter solis societatem , receptumque Lucis, fit quasi alter Sol minor; quamobrem conducit ad omnes generationes perfectionesque.* The Moon, by reason of her Communication with the Sun, and the Reception of his Light, becomes

comes, as it were, another lesser Sun; and therefore concurs to the production and perfection of all Sublunary Effects. But how much more willingly should I subscribe to this Opinion, if the Authors of it had raised their Thoughts above the material Spheres, to signify that other more glorious Moon, shining in the Emphyreal, so superiourly bright that the greatest Honour which our material Moon could ever receive, was, when it was made a Foot-stool to the Virgin Mary, *Et luna sub pedibus ejus*. This Moon indeed, the Virgin Mary, was chiefly made to be the inseparable Companion of the Increased Sun of Justice, whether upon Earth, in the state and Condition of a *Viator*, or in Heaven, in that of a *Comprehensor*. This, when full with the Immensity of that Divine Light, which he is continually reflecting upon Her, will truly appear to all those who contemplate her Glory, as another inferiour Sun, concurring with the Divine Mercy, to the Regeneration of all Sinners, to the Perfection of all the Just, and to the future Glory of all the Elect:

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inſomuch that it may be a Queſtion, whether *Mary* be a greater Ornament to the Emphyreal above with her Light, or a Help to our inferiour World below with her Influence.

§. V.

THe only Objection that can be made to all our foregoing Diſcourſe, is, that it ſeems to take off as much from the Jurisdiction of *Chriſt's* Kingdom, and his Royal Prerogative, as it allows to that of his Virgin Mother. But this I look upon to be no more, than the hisſing of ſome of thoſe Serpents of the North, who, born to perſecute this great Woman, ſeem to Vie with the Dragon in the Apocalypſe, in Hatred and Malice, when he flew at Her with ſo much Rage. The ancient Romans certainly never ſhew'd Themſelves to be more truly the Lords of the Univerſe, than when they could make Kings of private Men. So the Empire of *Chriſt* never appear'd greater, nor did *Chriſt* ever give greater Demonſtrations of his

his sovereign Power, than when he made a Creature so powerful as Mary. It is no disparagement to the Load-stone to be able to communicate its attractive Force to the Iron or steel that it touches. Rather, it is an evident proof of its greater Virtue, to possess it in such an eminent degree, as to be able to communicate it to other Things, without losing the least particle of it in it self? This being undeniable, we will therefore conclude thus.

Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, Civitas Dei.
 Psal. 8. 6. Great and Glorious Things, I own it, have been said of Thee, O sovereign City of God, within the narrow compass of this little Book. Others have already, and I hope will still publish greater Encomiums of Thee in larger Volumes: Those, I mean, who contemplate Thee more, who know Thee better, and, which I cannot add without envying their Happiness, know better how to Love Thee than I do. However neither my poor Pen, nor the Pens of other more sublime Writers to come hereafter, shall ever be a just measure, to
 Z draw

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draw out the Plan of Thy greatness by, in any true proportion. Rather, as it is true to say, at least, in a moral way of speaking, that the Tops of our highest Mountains are as far distant from the Firmament, as the Valleys that are under them; so we may also say, and with equal Truth, that the most penetrating Wits and greatest Understandings of our ablest Masters, as well as the meaner Capacities of the Vulgar people, are equally distant from Thee, Great Virgin; who, as the highest of Heavens, nay the very Heaven of Heaven it self, *Cælum Cæli Domino*, wast made on purpose to be the delightful abode of Thy sovereign Lord. Wherefore, if amongst the Astronomers, who could never yet justly determine the admirable Situation, Motion, and Distance of the Celestial Spheres one from another, he is said to discourse best of the matter, who best salves all appearances; So, by the same Rule, since we cannot exactly determine how near, the Rank Thou enjoyest in Heaven, is unto God himself, nor the violent and swift Motion of thy
most

most inflam'd Love, nor the boundless distance which is between Thee and other pure Creatures, we must believe that he comes nearest the Truth, in speaking of Thy greatness, who best salves those great and wonderful Appearances, of the Church's chief Protectress, of the Restorer of our losses occasion'd by *Eve*, of Companion to the Redeemer, of Helper in the Redemption, and of the great Mother of our infinitely greater God.

By a faithful Observation of all these surprising *Phænomena*, let any one compose a right System of this glorious Heaven, the ever Bd. Virgin *Mary*; and then let him tell me, if what I have here Projected before him, in this Compendious Map, as I may call it, be any thing Exceeding, either the Height which I have assigned to her Merit, or the Efficacy which I have ascribed to her Power.

THE SECOND PART.

*The Means which conduce to the better
obtaining of true Devotion to
the Virgin Mary.*

THat Gold ought not to be look'd upon as of any Value, which will not abide the usual Trials of Fire and Touch-stone. So Love, the noblest of Affections, as Gold is amongst Metals, to be true and sincere, must be able to stand that Trial, which is proper to it, and never fails to discover the sincerity of it; I mean, the Touch-stone of Action, and good Deeds. For, as St. Gregory says. *Probatio dilectionis Exhibitio est Operis.* The best, and indeed the only proof of our Love, is the Exhibition of our Works. By what token do you distinguish a true Fire from a painted one, better than by its Activity and Motion? A painted Fire is always quiet, always in the same place, never advances a step, wages war with

with no body , hurts nothing , not so much as the dry Cloth, or Board that it sticks upon. On the contrary, a true Fire can never be quiet, not even for a moment : 'tis always in motion , and if it could , 'twould run over the whole World , and set it all in a Flame. Wherefore, not only that sacrilegious Mask of Devotion, which we exclaim'd against in the beginning of this little Book , is not the true Devotion to the Virgin , which her Clients are to aim at ; but not even this Barren Devotion , which , as altogether fruitless and void of good Works, yields nothing but a few Leaves of bare Words , vain Protestations , and empty Proffers of nothing at all. For , tho' this sort of Devotion has something in it , that looks like a Will , or a Desire to please the Virgin ; yet, it certainly cannot be called a ready Will , whilst it lies thus dormant for want of Action. The true Client of *Mary* must never be Idle , but always either in Action, or in a Readiness to Act , whenever her Will , or her Honour shall require it , according to the state

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and condition of every one. In the same manner, he that is not yet arrived to the perfection of a true Client of *Mary's*, but sincerely desires to be such, must also resolve to Act; because his chief sollicitude and Care ought to be to make use of those Means, which will lead him the shortest way, to the End he desires. If you ask me what these Means are; I answer, that tho' they are many and various, yet they may be all conveniently reduced to Four: And I am confident, that if you walk on with Courage and Resolution, by these Four Paths, it will not be long, before you discover that happy Land of Bliss, that Paradise of Salvation, and that Harbour of Security, which the Protection of the Virgin never fails to bring her true Clients to. The four Means I shall propose, are these. Frequently to Meditate upon the Virgin. To Read Books that treat of Her. To call upon her by Prayer. And to practise some particular Exercises of Devotion and Duty towards her. The way is neither very long, nor very difficult.

However

However it requires Resolution. Let us therefore begin by the Two-first; and because they are in a manner inseparable one from the other, we will treat of them Both in the same Chapter.

C H A P. I.

In which are proposed the First and Second Means, to obtain the Devotion to the Virgin : to wit, frequent Meditation, and Reading of matters Relating to Her.

§. I.

Meditation, according to St. Thomas, is the first Milk with which true Devotion is nourished: Because our Will, as we all know, being a blind Power, makes no Step but by the Direction and Guidance of the Understanding. *Voluntas oritur ex Intelligentia.* * On the other hand, the Understanding it self, altho' it be not blind, yet is so weak-sighted, that it do's not discover Things all at once, but only by degrees, and by often looking upon them with

* S. Aug. l. 14. de Trin. c. 8.

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Attention : like that Watch-man, who was appointed by God's command , to observe what Chariots came into *Babylon*, towards the Evening ; *Contemplatus est diligenter multo intuitu.* Isa. 21. 7. He observed every thing very narrowly ; and was not contented with once or twice looking , but he look'd *multo intuitu*, very often , and very earnestly , till he could give a faithful Account of what he was sent to discover. And this is the Advantage we receive by Meditation. Those Truths which at first sight , by reason of the imperfection of our Understanding , appear'd unto us in Shapes far different from the real , *Video homines velut arbores ambulantes.* Marc. 8. 24. *I see Men like walking Trees:* Afterwards by little and little , and by looking fixedly upon them, will appear in their natural Shapes and Colours , capable to move any Heart ; whereas before , They could make no impression upon us. And therefore St. *Augustin* assures us , that *Intellectus cogitabundus initium est omnis boni*, a Thoughtful Understanding is the beginning of all Good.

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'Twould be no great wonder, if a Painter, whilst he is drawing out the Face of some great Beauty, should at length be inamour'd with that Face : because he has always his Eye upon it, and considers at his leisure and with Attention, every Feature of it, and every Grace. Whereas another, who only gives a passing glance upon the same Face, is not so much taken with it, nay oftentimes even despises it. In the same manner, one that Meditates seriously upon a Truth, and gives it time to sink into the Understanding, and to display all its Beauty, is easily moved to embrace it : whereas, upon another who spends but a flying Thought upon the same Truth, and looks at it, as I may say, with a cursory Eye, it makes little or no impression at all.

This Means of Meditation we are now speaking of, the better to obtain the desired Effect, ought in my Opinion, to propose unto it self Two different sorts of Matter. The one comprehending the unspeakable Grandures of the Mother of God,
her

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her Prerogatives , Privileges , and Virtues : The other , her great Charity and Love towards us , together with the innumerable Favours and Blessings , she is continually showering down upon us , tho' never so ungrateful and undeserving of them. By a frequent Repetition of these Considerations , we shall easily conceive within our Hearts, a perfect Love for the Virgin *Mary*, both as to the Essential and the Accidental parts of it, which we mention'd in the beginning of this Treatise ; and consequently we shall come to that true and perfect Devotion towards Her , which is the whole End , this little Book aims at. We read in the Life of Father *Francis Suarez* , a man equally Eminent in both the Schools , of Learning and Sanctity , that on all the solemn Feasts of the Bd. Virgin, he used to spend Two whole Hours of Prayer , in these devout Considerations , which I here propose to you; well knowing , that *Cogitare de illâ, sensus est consummatus* Sap. 6. 16. To think of *Mary* , is consummated Wisdom ; This being a Study , both
highly

highly pleasing to God, and advantageous to our selves. It is pleasing to God, for the singular satisfaction he takes, in seeing us endeavour to discover the signal Perfections of *Mary*, by our own pious Industry, rather than to reveal them unto us immediately by himself. It is most advantageous to Us, by reason of the abundant Reward we shall receive for it, from *Mary* her self, as she told this Learned and devout Author, I now mention'd: who acknowledges to have drunk of the Waters of this heavenly Wisdom, of which he had so large a Share, at the same Fountain, as *Albertus Magnus*, *St. Bernard*, and *St. Bernardin* had done before him; that is, from the Virgin *Mary*: who open'd the Eyes of his Understanding, otherwise dimm, in so sudden and so wonderful a manner, that, of a very ordinary Capacity, when he first apply'd himself to his Studies, he was able afterwards to fill the whole World with Admiration of his Learned and pious Works. * You in the mean time, Dear Reader, endeavour

* *In Vita ipsius.*

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endeavour to follow, at least at a distance, the foot-steps of so great a Man, and zealous Client of the Virgin's, by applying your self with all the Attention you are able, to a frequent Meditating upon the Considerations I have here proposed: and remember, that those Bees which sit longest upon the Flowers, always make the best Hony.

§. II.

THe other Milk, with which Devotion is nourished, is spiritual Reading. As holy Pictures serve instead of Books, to the more Ignorant sort of people that cannot read: So those Beginners, who know not yet how to Meditate upon a Mystery, must help themselves with Books instead of Meditation. And this is the advice Saint *Teresa* used to give to her Novices, in the Exercise of mental Prayer; to help themselves by Reading of spiritual Books; and so grow Rich by other men's Labours, as barren Countries do, with foreign Commodities imported from abroad. A

most

most wholesom Advice , not only for Beginners , but for all , even Proficients and Perfect in the Art of Meditating. And for this Reason, the Apostle earnestly recommends this spiritual Exercise of Reading to his beloved *Timothy*, *Attende Lectioni*. Tim. I. Tho' this Advice be much more necessary for those, who not being refresh'd with Showers from their own Climate , have no other way to provide against the Aridity of their Spirit , than by borrowing Water from their Neighbours Cisterns.

Saint *Augustin* in that famous Book of his *Retractations* , in which by discovering unto the World the Spots of his otherwise bright Understanding , he truly shew'd himself to be the Sun of his Age , and perchance more in that Book, than in all his other learned Works, * recounts that a certain King of *Cyprus* , as much disfigured in his Face , as he was wise and subtle in his Understanding , fearing lest his Queen should bring him Children as ill-shaped as himself, used this

A a Caution,

* *S. Aug. Retract. l. 2. c. 62.*

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Caution. He order'd all the Rooms of his Royal Apartments to be hung round with Pictures of the most beautiful Faces that the Art of Painting could invent; hoping by this Means, that the continual sight of those comely Pictures would imprint the Ideas of them, so strong and so lively, in the Queen's Imagination, that, as it often happens, Her Children would take more after those Pictures, than after the Father. And why cannot you make use of some such Industry, for a better purpose? I often hear you complain that your Imagination is so monstrously ugly and deform'd, that in spite of all your Endeavours, it fills your Mind in time of Prayer, with Objects, if not abominable and Criminal, at least very Earthly, and impertinent to the Subject you are about. Try therefore this Method. Let there be in every Corner of your Chamber some pious Book, that treats of the Virgin Mary's Merits, Perfections, Titles, and Prerogatives: of the Rewards She promises to her faithful Clients, of the strict Correspondence we ought to entertain

entertain with Her , and the like. Fix your Eye now and then upon these , and you will find by Experience what noble Thoughts , and pious Sentiments will rise in your Heart , which before was so dull and so heavy.

I know very well that all promiscuous Reading of spiritual Books is not equally profitable : Some are proper for some people , others for others : Some at one time, and others at another. To the End your Reading may never be otherwise than beneficial to you, it must have the same Properties , as a wholesom and constant Diet observed by people of good Health and sound Constitution. This , according to Physicians , never does more good than when it has these three Conditions. That the Meat it self be good in its kind , wholesom and savoury ; that it be well chew'd; and that it be taken in such Quantity as the Stomach can best bear, and digest with most ease. Be sure, therefore , let your Books which treat of the Virgin Mary be well chosen, and not pickt up , as it

were, by chance, or the first that comes to Hand: and if you are not a sufficient Judge of them your self, take the advice of a prudent Director in the choice of them; and remember that the biggest are not always the best; there being several Books of this Nature very bulky and very diffused, which yet contain but very little Substance. Read them leisurely and with Attention, and do not run them over slightly, or in hast, and with impatience till you get to the End of the Chapter, as those commonly do, who read for vain Curiosity; and remember again, that as much as you shall Chew of this spiritual Food with leisure, and digest with care, so much and no more will remain within you, for Nourishment, and will be converted into good spiritual Substance. And tho' Excesses in this kind, as well as in corporal Food, are carefully to be avoided; since they only overcharge the Stomach, and oftentimes even cause a Surfeit; yet, I advise you to allow as much Time for Reading as you can, considering your State
and

and condition , or other indispen-
 sable Duties , which must never be
 omitted for Works of supereroga-
 tion , tho' never so pious. For, Ex-
 perience teaches us, that those pas-
 sing Summer-showers which only be-
 sprinkle the Plants , and do not
 soke into the very Roots of them,
 will never give them much vigour
 for growth. As for the rest ,
 who knows but one of those Read-
 ings well perform'd , may prove
 one day of infinite Advantage , and
 perchance nothing less worth to
 you than Heaven it self ?

There is no one that has ever
 read or heard of the Voyages of
 the famous *Columbus* , who is not
 surpris'd at the bold Flights he took
 from one Pole , as I may say , to
 the other ; When through Thou-
 sands of dangers , he sail'd further
 for the Discovery of new Countries,
 than ever the Roman Eagles could
 carry their Conquests : and this, upon
 an Enterprize so difficult in the Ex-
 ecution, and so dubious in the Event,
 as was the Conquering of a new
 World. Where did this daring Man
 find Wings proportionable for such

prodigious Flights ? He found them in *Plato's Timæus*. There, he read what that Philosopher discourses at large, of a certain Country call'd *Atlanta* or *Atalanta*, at first, a Continent with the rest of our known World, and afterwards made an Island, by the shake of a violent Earth-quake. Upon this, the Curiosity took him to go in search after this new Country, at that time so little known, and tho' it was so uncertain whether there was any such Country or no, or whether it was only a Fiction, and a meer Platonick Idea. If this be true, as we find in the *Memoirs of the Indies*, * we must needs confess, that all those Fleets which now-adays stock our *Europe* with such Plenty of rich forreign Commodities, Gold, Silver, Spices, Drugs, and Remedies of all sorts, unknown amongst us before, are all owing to the Reading of a Book. And tho' this should have more of the Hyperbole in it, than of real Truth, yet it will always be true, that the Books which I advise you to read, will open you the way to the

* *Pat. Cioca. tom. 2. Rerum Indicarum.*

the Discovery of new Worlds of another kind, new Commodities, and new Mines unknown to you before; I do not mean those, where Silver and Gold lie buried, but those other spiritual Mines, which do not fall under the Senses, and where the only true Riches of heavenly Wisdom are to be found. I my self know more than one, who at this present, are beholding to the frequent turning over of some little Book written in Praise of the Virgin, for their Vocation to a Religious state of Life; which is certainly the most assured Pledge we can have in this World, of entering one Day into that happy Land of Eternal Bliss, promised to so many, and which yet so few arrive to. If you, however, being already ingaged in another state of Life, are no more capable of so great a Happiness; yet, I dare be positive to assure you, that if you settle your Affections upon this sort of Reading, and take a liking to it, you will find in a short time that your pious Desires of consecrating your self wholly to the Virgin's service, of

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of pleasing her, glorifying her, and Loving her, will take Root in your Heart, and will daily improve in you, to a wonderful degree of true and solid Devotion; much more, than *Jacob's* Flocks were increased by the Stratagem of the speckled Rods, which he set before their Eyes, at every Brook they came to drink at.

C H A P. II.

The third Means for obtaining the Devotion to the Bd. Virgin : which is, frequently to call upon her by Prayer.

THE Astrologers pretend to know, and will tell you, if you'll believe them, that every Day of the Week is govern'd by the seven Planets in their turns, in such sort, that the Planet, which gives his own Name to that particular Day, on which it is his turn to Rule, communicates also to the same Day, his peculiar and proper Virtue: Wherefore some of them very charitably advise us, as a Secret of the mainest importance, to turn our Faces often in the Day, towards the Ruling Planet; in order, I suppose,

suppose, do draw from that part of the Heavens the purest Influences, and to suck in the sweetest Drops of that Life-giving Ambrosia, which that kind Planet is so liberally pouring down upon us. * A more solemn Lie than this, I scarce think has been usher'd into the World, by the Professors of this Art of Gueffing and never Hitting, since it has been abusively called a Science. However, to make the best use of a fabulous Imposture, we will lay it under our feet by way of a Step, to raise us to the Contemplation of a real and much more beneficial Truth. The propitious Star which Rules from above, not for Days, Weeks, or Months, but throughout the whole Year, is the ever glorious and Bd. Virgin Mary. To her therefore, let us turn our Eyes and our Thoughts, at every Hour of the Day, in order to draw from thence into our Hearts, those Heavenly Influences wherewith every Soul is blessed that receives them. For, as the Wiseman saith, *Beatus homo qui vigilat ad fores meas quotidie,*

* Georg. Venet. in Harm. Mundi.

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die , & observat ad postes ostij mei.
 Prov. 8. 34. Blessed is the Man
 who watches daily at my Gates,
 and waits for Audience at my Door.
 And this shall be the Third Means
 to obtain the so much desired De-
 votion towards the Bd. Virgin ; to
 call upon Her frequently by Prayer,
 according to the Advice of the Mel-
 liflous saint *Bernard*. * whose Hea-
 venly Eloquence , (as we observed
 before, upon another occasion) was
 all owing to the sweetness of that
 Virginal Milk , of which he drank
 so plentifully , at the Breasts of the
 Mother of Grace. *In rebus dubijs , in*
Angustijs , in periculis Mariam cogita,
Mariam invoca ; Non recedat ab Ore,
non recedat à Corde. In all your Doubts,
 in all your Afflictions , in all your
 Dangers , think of *Mary* , call upon
Mary. Let *Mary* always be in your
 Mouth , and never out of your
 Heart. Nay, I say further , that , as
 the beating of the Pulse is an un-
 doubted Sign of Life ; So , the fre-
 quent Thinking of *Mary*, and calling
 upon Her , will be, not only a very
 Efficacious Means to obtain the true
 Devotion

* *S. Bern. hom. 2. super Missus.*

Devotion towards Her , but also a very certain Token of having already obtain'd it. And therefore, in my Opinion , it is not our own Interest only , but a nobler Motive still of Love and Esteem , which ought to incite us to a frequent Invocation of the Bd. Virgin ; and to mix with our Petitions several other Affections and Expressions of Respect , of Congratulations, of Gratitude , and of Praise due to the incomparable Merits of this great Queen and Sovereign of Men and Angels. The Charge I have taken upon me, of being a Guide unto all the faithful Servants and affectionate Clients of the Virgin *Mary* , seems to require of me , not only to shew them the way they are to walk in; but also to lend a helping Hand to those at least amongst them , who are less able to walk by themselves. Behold here , therefore , a practical Method of calling upon the Virgin , ready drawn up for every Day in the Week, under a different Title ; and at the same time, a large Field open'd for your pious Zeal to expatiate in , and to give full scope

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scope to your Affections , by frequently renewing in the Day , in some shorter form , tho' not less fervent , the same Sentiments which are here expressed more at large. To begin therefore , Call upon the Virgin ,

On Sunday.

As your MOTHER.

O Great Mother of God ! Who by the Height of Thy Dignity art superiour to all that is Created; When I look upon my self , who am so Vile in thy presence , how is it possible that I should also presume to call Thee Mother ? And yet it is true. Thou , who art the Mother of my God , Thou , I say , and I will say it again , art also my Mother , left unto me as such , in virtue of that solemn Donation , which my dying *Iesus* made unto me upon the Cross , of all that belonged to him. Wherefore , I am resolved that my Miseries shall never prejudice me in my Right to the possession of so great a Happiness; since

since I have the Merits of thy own Divine Son, and his last Will and Testament in my favour. I will therefore call Thee Mother, and I will hope, as unworthy as I am, that Thou wilt also acknowledge me for one of thy Children. Come then, great Virgin, and shew thy self to be unto me a Mother, *Monstra te esse Matrem*. And if yet Thou wilt not hear my Voice, hear at least the Voice of my dear Saviour, who in the midst of his most bitter Torments gave me unto Thee in his own stead, by those loving Words, *Ecce filius tuus*. Behold Thy son. Behold me therefore, great Virgin, prostrate at Thy feet: Disdain not to let me enjoy so great an Honour: since thy first begotten has deserved it for me, who for my sake was born of Thee in a poor Stable; who for my sake lived with Thee in a poor Carpenters Shop; and who for my sake died upon a Cross under thy own Eyes. O! that Thou mayst see him one day Adored by all Nations as he deserves, and I desire he should; and that Thou mayst see Thy self acknowledged

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and honour'd for his great Mother!
Grant me in the mean time that
I may live like a true Child of
thine, that I may know my own Dig-
nity, that I may comply with my
Duty, and that I may abhor Sin
above all Things; since that is the
only thing which can render me
unworthy of thy Adoption and of
thy Love. Amen.

On Munday.

As Your QUEEN.

O Sovereign Queen of the Uni-
verse! As thou art the Daugh-
ter, the Mother, and the Spouse of
the Highest, Thou hast a sovereign
Right over all Creatures, and con-
sequently over me among the rest,
not upon one Title only, but upon
Thousands and Thousands: I there-
fore belong to Thee: I am one of
Thine. But tho' I am already Thine
upon account of the high Jurisdi-
ction Thou enjoyest over all Things,
yet this shall not satisfy me. I am
resolved to be Thine in a more
special manner, by Choice and
Free

Free Will. Prostrate therefore before the Throne of thy Greatness, behold I chuse Thee for my sovereign Queen : And by this Offering which I freely make unto Thee of my self , my Intention is to redouble in Thee that Right of Sovereignty , which upon other accounts Thou already possessest over us all. My fixt Resolution therefore is , that thou shalt intirely possess me upon this new Title. My Dependence shall be upon Thee : And Thou shalt be unto me the Executrix of the Divine Will , and of all the Designs of Providence concerning me. Dispose of me therefore henceforwards, Great Queen , and of all the Concerns of my Life, according to Thy Royal pleasure. Mix Prosperity with my Adversities , Adversity with my Prosperities , as Thou shalt see most convenient. I trust all to Thee : And whatever shall happen unto me by thy Appointment , shall be , if not agreeable and sweet , at least by far less bitter , for passing through the Hands of a Queen so amiable as Thou art. The only thing I beg of Thee , and with this I am con-

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tent, is, that after the many and various Vicissitudes of this mortal Life, I may come, by Thy means, to know Thee in the Kingdom of Everlasting Bliss, to Love Thee, to Honour Thee, and to Congratulate Thee, for the great Glory which Almighty God hath conferr'd upon Thee in Quality of Queen of Heaven, there to Reign with him, for Ever and Ever. Amen.

On Tuesday.

As MISTRESS of Purity.

O Virgin of Virgins, O Mother and Mistress of Purity! What a Divine School hast thou open'd upon Earth, and what rare Lessons hast Thou given us, by Thy own Example! Thou wast the first that ever offered up thy Virginity unto God by the sacred Tie of a Vow: and Thou didst offer it with a Vow so strong and inviolable, that to preserve it without spot, Thou wast ready even to renounce that high Honour Thou now enjoyest of being Mother of God. After Thee,
I

I see whole Legions of Virgins, who following Thy Instructions and Thy Example, do raise a holy Envy even among the Angels, by living in Body as pure as if they had no Bodies at all. And I, miserable Sinner, when I behold such Things, what can I say, or what can I do? I dare not presume so far as even to set my foot upon the Threshold of a School so sacred as Thine, lest I should defile it. However, at this distance, I beg leave to present Thee my humble Petition in this form. A poor Sinner, all Filth and Corruption, prostrate at the feet of the Mother of Purity, begs of her with all possible submission, such fountains of Tears, as may wash out the stains of his past Life; and so much Grace, as may give him Strength to chuse rather to die a Thousand Deaths, than ever to be defiled again with Sin. And can I apprehend that Thou wilt not grant this my Request? Oh no! 'Tis too much according to Thy own desire, to be rejected. And tho' Thou shouldst not have any Concern or Affection for me, yet Thou canst

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not but Love that Purity, which I beg of Thee, and that Thou thy self wilt be the Protectress and Guardian of it. Fix thy merciful Eyes therefore upon this miserable Sinner that I am; and take them not off from me, till having transform'd me into a new Man, I may follow Thee, first in this Life, and afterwards accompany Thee in Glory in the Life to come: Where, if I shall not be so happy as to sing in Company of the Virgins, that Virginal Canticle which will be thy Honour to intone for all Eternity, I may at least be of the Number of those, who shall have the Happiness to hear it. Amen.

On Wednesday.

As Your ADVOCATE.

O Mother of holy Love! O Life, O Sweetness, O Hope of poor Afflicted Mortals! Was it not then enough for my *Iesus*, to make himself my Advocate with his Eternal Father, unless he also made Thee my Advocate with himself?

It

It clearly appears how much he is sollicitous for my Salvation ; since, not content with having purchased it himself, at so dear a Rate, and by so many Means , he will have the joynt Concurrence of Thy Prayers , together with his own infinite Merits , to be the immediate Cause of the effectual obtaining of it. Prayers so Efficacious in the Court of Heaven , that even *Christ* himself, from whom they have all their Force and Efficacy, respects them as Laws. Wherefore , that this Design of my Dear Saviour , so full of Compassion towards me , may be fully compleated , I cast my self at thy Feet , as before an Altar of Refuge, and there most humbly prostrate before Thee , tho' the unworthiest of Creatures to appear in thy Presence , I do most solemnly protest that I do so far confide in Thy Assistance , that if my Salvation were all in my own Hands , I would immediately put it into Thine : so much do I trust unto Thee and the Concern thou hast for me , more than I dare trust to my self. It is true , and I must own it , that by
my

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my Sins I have cut the Channel of those Graces and Helps which thou art daily procuring for me from Heaven, by thy Prayers. However I hope thou wilt also remove this very Obstacle which I am putting to my own Salvation, by obtaining for me, that I may always second thy Prayers in my behalf, with a good Life, and may never hinder the Effect of them by a bad one. It was never yet known that a Cause, which Thou hadst taken in hand to patronize, was ever lost: And shall I fear that mine shall be the first? Oh No! If Thou be mindful of me, my loving Protectress, I am content that all the World besides forget me. Only turn thy Eyes upon me, and if at the sight of so much Misery in me, the Bowels of thy Mercy are not moved to Compassion towards me, I am willing to be abandoned by Thee. Only tell Almighty God that I am one of Thine, and I am content to perish, if that is not enough to save me. This Hope gives me assurance. With this I will live, and with this I am resolved to die. *Unica spes mea*

Iesus,

Iesus, & post Iesum Virgo Maria. My only Hope is *Iesus*, and next to *Iesus*, the Virgin *Mary*. Amen.

On Thursday.

As Your BENEFACTRESS.

THe most just punishment that can be inflicted upon a Person that is ungrateful for Favours received is to deprive him of them again. This is just what I should deserve at thy hands, O great Mother of God; since I have receiv'd so many singular Benefits from Thee, and have acknowledged them so little. I should deserve that thou shouldst turn those Eyes of Compassion another way, which Thou hast so often cast upon my Miseries, to relieve them with so much Goodness, as Thou hast done to my Shame and Confusion. I cannot deny but that my Ingratitude would deserve all this and a great deal more; Yet, such is my Confidence in Thy Goodness, and the high Esteem I have conceiv'd of it, that notwithstanding all my past Ingratitudes,

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titudes , I hope Thou wilt not let Thy self be overcome by my extreme Malice : But wilt rather do so much honour to Thy self , and to thy own Mercy , as to act, not according to my Demerits , but according to the Inclination of Thy own bountiful Heart. And shall I be confounded in this my pious Hope ? Never let it be said , O great Mother of Mercy. Come therefore , Mother of holy Love , Treasurer of the Divine Graces , and Refuge of Sinners : Come to my Aid , and never be tired with bearing with me. I put my self before Thee , as the poorest of all Creatures , and who stands most in need of thy Help. Hear therefore the Voice of one that calls upon Thee: Open the Bowels of Thy Mercy to a miserable Wretch , as I am : Lend thy helping Hand to one , who being fallen , implores thy Assistance to rise again. Remember, that as Thou art the Mother of my Saviour , so Thou art also the Mother of my Salvation ; And therefore , as many Titles as are wanting in me , to Challenge any Succour from

from Thee , so many Thou wilt find superabounding in Thy self to oblige Thee to come to my Aid. In the mean time , I faithfully promise Thee that if by thy Favour I am so happy as to be of the chosen Number of the Predestinate, I will never more be ungrateful to Thee ; but will recompense all my past Ingratitudes with Eternal Praises of Thy incomparable Bounty towards me ; and I will joyn in Quire with all the Blessed in Heaven , to sing those Mercies of the Almighty, which he has so liberally bestow'd upon me , through Thy bountiful Hands. Amen.

On Friday.

As Your DELIVERER.

WHat would become of me at this present , O sovereign Lady, if Thou wast not so Merciful ! How couldst Thou bear so long with this obdurate Temper of my Heart , which is not soften'd either with the Good Thou hast done for me , or the Evils Thou hast delivered

vered me from ? How often have I been upon the very brink of Hell, ready to drop into that horrible Precipice ; When Thou , O Queen of Mercy , whilst the Devils were greedily waiting to catch my unfortunate Soul , whilst my own Sins were pushing me forward and hastening my Fall , whilst the Divine Justice was just going to pronounce the dreadful Sentence against me, Thou , O most merciful Virgin, even without being called upon , camest of thy own accord running to my Aid , in my greatest Danger ; and by shewing unto the Eternal Father the Wounds of Thy Son , and unto Thy Son , Thy own most sacred Breasts , thou obtainedst Salvation for me , when I was upon the very point of Perdition ? Hadst Thou deferred but one moment longer to step in to my Succour , where had I been , Unhappy Creature ? I had been lost for all Eternity. And shall not all this be sufficient to soften my obdurate Heart ? Shall it not move me to consecrate the remainder of my Days to the Honour and Service of so merciful a Deliverer,

verer, as Thou hast been to me? Yes it shall, This is my fixed Resolution: And therefore from this moment, I yield my self up for Conquered: And Thou, great Virgin, shalt have all the glory of having subdued a Heart so rebellious as mine has hitherto been. I only beg of Thee to continue to be my constant Deliverer from all future Evils. Deliver me from another Hell, worse than that which Thou hast already preserved me from, I mean, the Hell of Sin. Deliver me from my self, who have so often been a worse Devil unto my self, than any in Hell. Deliver me infine from this miserable Course of Life which I have hitherto led, so ungrateful to that bountiful God, who through thy Means has so mercifully delivered me from all Evil. Amen.

On Saturday.

As your COMFORTER,

WHat wonderful Harmony is this,
which I find between the Height
C c of

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of thy Dignity , and the Bounty of thy Heart, O great Mother of Mercy ! If I lift up my Eyes to behold the sublime Throne of Glory, unto which Thou hast been assumed , my very Thoughts begin to tremble , and I am lost in the Contemplation of so much Greatness. Thou , most amiable Virgin , the greatest of all pure Creatures by immense Excess : The most beautiful Work that ever came out of the Divine hands , and only less than God himself : Thou , I say , dost form in Heaven , a peculiar Order by Thy self alone ; and by that strict Tie of Bloud whereby Thou art so nearly related to *Iesus* , Thou enterest into a Degree almost Divine. And yet , at this great distance from us , and in the midst of so much Greatness , not only Thou art not unmindful of us miserable Mortals here below ; but rather , the greatest pleasure Thou seemest to take in being so Powerful , is , that Thou art so much the better able to Comfort us in our Miseries. Other Friends abandon us in our greatest Calamities : But Thou , on the contrary,

contrary, lookeſt upon us with more tender Compaſſion, when we are the moſt Afflicted; and the greater our Miſeries are, the readier Thou art to relieve them. When we call upon Thee, thou comeſt immediately to our Comfort; Nay, how often even without being called upon, and preventing our very Prayers, doſt Thou come to lay the Storms which riſe within our Breasts, and in the miſt of our very Shipwracks, that is, in the Height of our Deſpair, doſt Thou make Thy ſelf unto us a ſecure Haven of Peace and Tranquillity? Blessed be for ever that adorable Hand of God which has made Thee ſo Powerful, and at the ſame time ſo full of Compaſſion, and has joyn'd in Thee, the moſt tender Heart of the beſt of Mothers, together with the moſt awful Majeſty of the greateſt of Queens. May Thou alſo for Ever enjoy the Kingdom Thou reigneſt in, and ſit in Thy glorious Throne, ſince it becomes Thee ſo well. I, in the mean time, from this Vale of Miſery, and in an Ecſtaſy of Admiration at the unparal-

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•
I tell'd Beauties of thy great Soul, do
as heartily rejoyce at all Thy Great-
ness, as if it were my own; and
I do here solemnly declare, that
rather than Thou shouldst want the
smallest Ray of that immense Glory
which surrounds Thee in Heaven,
I would lay down a Thousand Lives,
if I had so many. But Thou, glo-
rious Virgin, who among so many
high Titles dost not disdain also
That of being my Comforter, en-
courage me daily more and more
to bear up against all the Troubles
and Afflictions which shall hereafter
assault me: but chiefly at the most
dangerous Assault of all, the Hour
of my Death: and take it for no
small part of thy Glory, to have
met with a Misery to relieve in
me, the most proportion'd of any
other to the Greatness of thy
Mercy. Amen..

C H A P. III.

In which is proposed the fourth Means to obtain the true Devotion to the Virgin : which is to practise some peculiar Acts of service or Duty towards her.

THe last Means I shall propose unto you for the obtaining the genuine spirit of Devotion towards the Bd. Virgin, is to use some of those Exterieur Exhibitions of Duty and Piety towards her, which, for the Connexion they have with the interiour Devotion of the Heart, as being the most proper to nourish it, are called by the same Name of *Devotions*. And therefore some Doctors, when they define Devotion in general, expressly use these Terms * *Amor Obsequiorum*. A Love of our Duties, or a Zeal of doing all that we can for the service of the Person whom we intend to honour. Since therefore they are so necessary for our purpose, I have thought it proper to suggest unto you Twelve different sorts of Exercises

C c 3

* *Alvares. 3. p. l. 2.*

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ercises of this Nature , in Honour of the Virgin ; just as many as will serve , to make up a Crown for that glorious Queen of Heaven, perchance not less honourable nor less Acceptable to Her , than that of her Twelve Stars mention'd in the Apocalypse. And to encourage you the more to the practice of these pious Exercises , I will accompany you in them , and lead you as it were by the Hand , with a short and easy way of Expressing ; and point out unto you , as you go on , some Examples which very Eminent Persons have given us in each kind : For now I must Imagine I am writing for such, as being yet but Beginners in this pious School of Love and Devotion towards the Virgin , are willing to Learn , and copy out of Others , what they are not so able to invent of Themselves.

First Duty.

To chuse the Virgin for your Mother.

YOur first Exercise of Duty and Respect towards the great Mother of God, shall be to chuse her also for your own Mother. It is but fitting that this Duty should take the first place: since *Christ* himself not only taught it us, from the Chair of the Cross, but, to imprint it deeper in our Minds, as a point of the greatest Concern, he kept it for the last Thing he had to recommend unto us. *Ecce Mater tua. Behold Thy Mother:* to shew us as it were that then he died contented, when he left his Blessed Mother Heiress of his Love towards us, and us Heirs of his Love towards his Bd. Mother. The first time you make this Choice, 'twill not be amiss to make it upon some solemn Feast of our Lady, with a Novena before it, by way of Preparation. From thence forward every Year you shall renew your Election upon the same Day; and
having

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having humbly begg'd Pardon of so
good a Mother, for all your past
Disobediences towards her, you shall
promise to be more faithful to Her,
and more fervent in her Service for
the future : and at the same time
you shall offer unto Her, by way
of Recompence for what has been
wanting in you of your Duty to-
wards her, that singular Obedience
which was pay'd unto Her by her
Divine Son; When, living upon
Earth, he made himself subject to
her: *Et erat subditus illi*. And this is
a Devotion which *Christ* himself
taught his beloved *Saint Gertrude*,
with his own Mouth. * But besides
this, as all dutiful and well bred
Children do to their Parents, you
must ask Blessing of the Virgin,
every Day throughout the whole
Year, Morning and Evening, as
Bd. *Stanislaus* used to do, who signali-
zed himself in this Devotion, in a
very particular manner. And for a
short Formula, or Method of doing
it, you may use these words of *St.*
Ignatius the Martyr, which are ve-
ry proper: *Mater vera Salvatoris, Ma-*
ter adoptata Peccatoris, in gremio mater.
* *S. Gertrud. l. 5. c. 33.*

na tua pietatis Claude me. True Mother of my Saviour, Adoptive Mother of Sinners, receive me within the Bosom of thy maternal Affection.

Second Duty.

To Worship Her in her Images and Pictures.

THe Devil could never comfort himself better, for the losses he suffered in the destruction of Idolatry, than by persecuting holy Images and Pictures, especially those of *Christ* and his holy Mother. Against these he has turned all his Fury, like a Tigress enraged at the loss of her young ones; He has cursed them by the Tongues of so many Hereticks, torn them to pieces by their Hands, oppugned them by the Pens of so many Arch-hereticks, and endeavour'd to destroy them by the Persecutions of Five powerful Emperours. But in spite of all his Rage and Malice, the more they are hateful to him, the more they will always be honoured and

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and esteem'd by the Clients of *Mary*.
Saint Hedwiges, Dutcheſs of *Poland*,
made ſo great account of one of
theſe Pictures of our Lady, which
ſhe wore in a Ring, that even
after her Death, it could never be
taken off from her Finger. And
Lewis, ſurnamed the *Pious*, was never
without ſuch a Picture hanging
about his Neck. In Battels it was
his Buckler : In his Sports and Di-
verſions, he uſed it for better En-
tertainment : And often, when he
was Hunting with his Courtiers,
he would ſeparate from them whiſt
they follow'd the Game, and ſtrik-
ing into ſome remote part of the
Wood, there he would fall upon
his knees before it; and inſtead of
Purſuing the Prey, he would offer
himſelf as a Voluntary Prey to that
Virgin, whoſe greateſt Delight is to
Hunt after Mens Hearts. 'Twould
not be amiſs if every one had a
Picture or an Image of our Lady
in his Chamber, in order to kiſs
her Feet with Reverence and Devo-
tion, as often as he goes in or out;
renewing at the ſame time his Pro-
miſes of fidelity in her Service, ac-
cording

according to the laudable Custom of her faithful Servants, and so much favoured by Her, the Carthusian Monks.

Third Duty.

To visit her Churches devoutly.

Altho' it be our Duty to Worship Almighty God in all places, yet it is certain that Churches, where he chuses to give more sensible tokens of his Divine presence, are particularly designed for this End. In the same manner, tho' it be very fitting to honour the Virgin every where, even privately and in her private Images, yet, 'tis certainly much better to honour her in those more Remarkable Images, which are exposed in our Churches for publick Veneration, and which She her self has chosen as the immediate Instruments whereby she distributes among the Faithful her greatest Favours, and often very miraculous ones. To these Churches, which are as so many Cities of Refuge for Sinners, the Devout Clients

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Clients of the Virgin ought to make their Pilgrimages , if they are at a distance , and their daily Visits , if nearer home. Saint *Henry* the Emperour , a Prince who appear'd in this World , to shew by his example , that it was not impossible for Majesty and Piety to sit upon the same Throne , as often as he came into any Town , the first thing he did, was to Visit the Church of our Lady, if there was any in that Town dedicated to Her. There are several who never go out of their Houses, without visiting some Church of the Virgin , before they come home again. This pious practice was inviolably observed by *Thomas Sanchez*, a learned Divine and a great Writer of his Time. And when the state of Life you are ingaged in , will not permit you to go abroad , you may supply this Visit , by turning your self in your own Chamber towards some of those Churches , as *Bd. Stanislaus* used to do : Who when he could not go abroad , would fall upon his Knees in his Chamber , with his Face towards some Church of our Lady , and
upon

upon the Wings of Love would send his Heart thither, to carry his dutiful Affections to the great Mother of God.

Fourth Duty.

To recite Daily her Office, and her Rosary.

THe two illustrious Religious Orders of *Carthusians* and *Dominicans* are living Monuments of Mary's great Liberality and Beneficence towards all her devout Clients. Both the one and the other have taught us Excellent Methods how to Praise her. The *Carthusians*, being a very rigorous Order, were soon after their first Establishment brought to such streights, for want of Novices who had Resolution and Courage enough to profess under that holy Habit, an Institute of so much Austerity in its Solitude, in its Silence, and in its whole Method of Living, that the whole Order was in danger of dying out, almost before it was well settled. In this Distress they could not think of any more

D d efficacious

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efficacious Means to increase their Numbers , than by making their Application to the Blessed Virgin; wherefore they obliged themselves by solemn Vow , to recite her Office publickly every Day. And by this means they have hitherto secured their Succession from Age to Age, so solidly , that 'tis now upwards of five Hundred years , that their Rule , tho' so severe , has been Religiously and inviolably observed throughout all Christendom , in spite of Time it self : Which , though it beats down the greatest Potentates of the Earth , with their States and Kingdoms , yet can never vanquish those who have abandoned themselves to the Protection of *Mary*. The other Religious Order , of the *Dominicans* , came into the World in the Heat of the most troublesom Times which perchance the Church ever had. And with what Heavenly Industry did these Evangelical Labourers , do you think , change the whole Face of Europe , from a Wilderness of Horrour and Confusion , thro' the Excess of Heretical Impiety , into a Garden of Delights, but

but by ingrafting the Devotion of the Holy Rosary into the Hearts of Men, grown at that time almost savage as to any thing of Virtue and Religion? It is recounted in the Annals of that learned Order, that Saint *Dominick* extremely afflicted at the little Harvest he had made in the Diocess of *Toulouse*, after so much Sweat and Toil, with which he had cultivated that Country, being one day in Prayer before an Altar of the Virgin, his Protectress, and humbly expostulating with her his ill Success, received this Answer from her. *Dominick*, thou art cultivating a Soil which will always remain barren, as long as the Rain does not fall upon it. And it was given him to understand at the same time, that this fertilizing Rain, was to be the above-mention'd Devotion of the Holy Rosary, together with the Meditation upon those divine Mysteries which it includes. I cannot think that any faithful Servant of *Mary's* needs any other Motive, to apply himself to the Exercise of these two Devotions, of her Office and Rosary, since we

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have Two such holy Religious
Orders for our Guides , and the
whole Catholick World for Com-
panions in the practice of them.

Fifth Duty.

*To prepare by a Novena , to Solemnize
her principal Feasts.*

A Tender Nurse , whose Breasts
are full of Milk, desires nothing
more than to discharge them into
the Mouth of her dear Nurse-child.
In the same manner , the Bd. Vir-
gin who is certainly a Mother to
us , incomparably more tender than
any Nurse can be , is never better
pleased , than when She is commu-
nicating her Favours to us , and
only wants our Disposition to re-
ceive them ; for this Reason She is
always repeating to the Heart of
every one of her Clients , *Dilata os
tuum , & implebo illud.* Open thy
Mouth , and I will fill it with hea-
venly Nourishment. The Counsel
therefore which I have to give you
at present , is to prepare for the
Solemnizing her greater Feasts , by a
previous

previous Devotion of Nine days before the Feast it self, in order to dispose your self the better to receive those Graces and Blessings, which She is always ready to bestow, but never more liberally than upon those Days; and much more still upon those Persons, who are more solicitous to dispose themselves for them. Call upon her, on every one of these days Nine times; taking at each time, one of the Nine Quires of Angels to present your humble Addresses to her. Endeavour also to dispose your affairs so, that you may be more at leisure during this time, to practise with greater Attention those other Means which I propose, for the obtaining the true Devotion to the Virgin Mary. Particularly 'twill be proper at that time, to examine very exactly how your Accounts stand with the Virgin, as to Debt and Credit, I mean, her Favours and your Correspondence with them; to the End you may encourage your self to discharge at least some part of that great Debt, since you can never hope to pay it all. Saint Gertrude,

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upon

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upon the Feast of our Lady's Assumption, saw under the Virgin's Royal Mantle, a most beautiful Quire of young Virgins, attended by Angels, and caressed in a particular manner by the Queen of Heaven herself: And it was told her, that That happy Company were the Souls of those, who for some Days before had prepared themselves with more particular Devotion, to celebrate that great Feast: And that from thenceforwards, in reward of their extraordinary Fervour, they should be look'd upon by the Virgin with a more favourable Eye, and be protected with greater Affection by their Guardian Angels.

Sixth Duty.

To honour those Saints particularly, who were nearest related, or more specially devoted to her.

THe first Law of true Friendship is Conformity of Wills; whereby we are obliged not only to love our Friend, but also to love all those who love our Friend, or whom

whom our Friend loves. This Law, by the same Rule, obliges all the Clients of our Lady to honour those Saints in a more special manner, to whom the Virgin has a more particular Relation, either of Kinred, Affection, or of any other Title; as for example, St. *Ioseph*, her beloved Spouse. St. *Ioachim* and St. *Anne*, her happy Parents; St. *Iohn* the Evangelist, the first of her adoptive Children; St. *Iohn* the Baptist, the first Sanctified by her Means. St. *Bernard*, who was admitted to suck of the Milk of her Virginal Breasts. St. *Herman Ioseph*, who was exalted to the Honour of her Spousals. St. *Iohn Damascen*, Defender of Her Images. St. *Ilaefonsus*. Asserter of her Virginity. All Founders of Religious Orders, who in a particular manner have dedicated their Orders to her Service. And so of a great many others, that might be mention'd. That this practice is highly agreeable to her cannot be doubted, since She her self has often been pleased to suggest it. In the year 1648. she appear'd to a certain Moor, who was at that time

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time a Slave in *Naples*, with a Countenance so full of Sweetness and Majesty, that tho' he had been till then so obstinate in his Infidelity and Errors, that he would hear Nothing of embracing the Christian Faith, She immediately gain'd his Heart: And having thus converted him, She commanded him to take the name of *Ios pb* in Baptism, in memory of her dear Spouse. * She also recommended to a Noble Man of *Rheims* the Devotion to St. *Anne*, her beloved Mother, and taught him a particular form of saluting her; Which to this very day, is to be read ingraved upon an ancient Monument of Marble, in one of the Churches of that famous City. † And if in any thing we can be sure to meet with the Virgin's Inclination, it must be in this; since herein we only follow the way She her self has mark'd out unto us.

SEVENTH

* *Chrysog. in Mundo Mar. p. 2.*

† *Barry in Parad.*

Seventh Duty.

*To procure Masses to be said , or to hear
them in her Honour.*

That which *Christ* our Saviour particularly intended, when he left unto his Church the adorable Sacrifice of Holy Mass, was , to free Mankind from the necessity which otherwise we should all ly under , of living in a constant Ingratitude to our heavenly Father. For, the Eternal Father having made us a Gift of infinite value , in the Person of his only begotten Son, where could our Poverty have found a Return of Gratitude proportionable to so great a Gift, if the Divine Son himself, out of Compassion to our Weakness and Misery , had not supplied our Insufficiency ; by making himself an Offering or Sacrifice of Thanksgiving upon our Altars ? The Angelical Hierarchies might , indeed , have lent us their Hearts and their Tongues , to perform that Duty ; But , *Quid dignum poterat esse beneficijs Ejus ?* What Heart,
or

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or what Tongue could sufficiently express the greatness of such a Favour? What proportion can there be betwixt a limited Thanksgiving, (such as that would be, tho' all Men and Angels should joyn Hearts and Tongues together,) and a Gift of an infinite Value? There was no other means left, but for the Donour himself to become the Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, for his own Gift, if he design'd to receive any Acknowledgment equal to the Benefit. Behold here, a large Field open'd to your Zeal, for the Honour of the Virgin *Mary*. If you are not capable of saying Mass your self, procure as many to be said as you can conveniently, according to your Circumstances, for this Intention: To thank Almighty God, for the immense Treasures of Grace, Sanctity, and Glory which he has been pleased to confer upon the incomparable Soul of that great First-born of all pure Creatures, the glorious Virgin *Mary*. O, how agreeable a Token will this be to the Virgin! All the Saints and Angels in Heaven together
cannot

cannot make her a more noble Present. If your condition , however , will not allow you to procure Masses , at least so frequently, endeavour to supply it, by hearing and assisting at them. *Sebastian* , King of *Portugal* , upon all Saturdays was wont to hear one Mass, and to serve another, in honour of the Virgin: looking upon that sacred Ministry, as an Honour far above the Dignity of a temporal King, since 'twould be justly esteem'd a very great One, even among the highest Seraphims in Heaven. Imitate this great and pious King; And if you desire a set Form, or Method of offering up the H. Mass, for the above-said Intention, you may make use of the following one.

O Father of sovereign Majesty !
Immense Ocean of all good !
Who , from the inexhaustible Treasury of Thy own infinite Perfections , hast so liberally poured forth into the great Soul of the ever glorious Virgin *Mary* , such ineffable Riches of Grace , and such plenty of all thy Divine Gifts ; I humbly prostrate my self before
Thee,

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Thee, and in the profoundest Acknowledgment of my Unworthiness, I do with all the Gratitude I am capable of, render Thee my most hearty Thanks for all the Mercies, Thou hast so bountifully shewn unto Her, as much as if they had been shewn unto my self. And because the Acknowledgments of a Creature so vile as I am, is of no value in Thy sight, I offer unto Thee for Thanksgiving, This adorable Victim of infinite Worth, which is now Sacrificing upon the Altar; and I presume to borrow from his Divine Heart those Sentiments of gratitude due unto Thee, which may make my sincere, but poor Acknowledgment worthy of thy Acceptance. Amen.

Eighth Duty.

To fast on the Vigils of her Feasts, or to do some other Works of Penance.

WHen a Child only begs to be taken up into the Mother's Arms, the Mother does not always comply with his desire: But if he begs it crying,

crying, then she takes him up immediately, caresses him, and wipes off his Tears. How much more agreeable and Efficacious would the Incense of our Prayers be, if we added unto it the Myrrh of Mortification, and Voluntary Chastising of the Body? It is not possible, that at such pressing Instances, the tender Bowels of the Mother of Mercy should not be moved to take compassion of us. *Saint Elizabeth*, Queen of *Portugal*, upon all Saturdays and Vigils of the Solemn Feasts of our Lady, used to put her feeble and extenuated Body in mind of its Duty to the Bd. Virgin, by allowing it no other food upon those Days, but a little Bread and Water. And by this means, her Prayers never failed of meeting with a favourable Grant of whatsoever she desired. If you cannot perform so much as this holy Queen, at least you may practise some sort of Abstinence on the Day before those great Solemnities: And in this manner, endeavour to imitate even the Virgin her self; who was so addicted to Abstinence from her very Infancy,

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that,

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that, as *Nicephorus* seems to insinuate, She would never suck her Mother's Milk above once in a Week; as if by those early beginnings of rigorous Abstinence, She was already preparing a Paradise of Delights, within her Virginal Body, for the Son of God to dwell in. And what has been said of Fasting, may be understood in proportion of all other corporal Austerities, which by the Saints and spiritual Writers are generally comprised under the same name of Fast.

Nineth Duty.

To give Alms for her sake.

THe fishing hook never catches any Fish, unless the Fish first catches the Hook. And this is another Reason, why our Prayers to the Bd. Virgin are oftentimes without Effect. Because our Hands are stretched out for receiving, and close shut up for giving: contrary to the advice of the Divine Wisdom; *Non sit porrecta manus tua ad accipendum, & ad dandum collecta.* Eccl. 4.

36. *Alexander Alensis* the greatest Master in Divinity of his time, purely because he had made a Resolution, never to refuse any thing that was ask'd him for the Virgin's sake, put on the rough Habit of *St. Francis*, upon the bare instance of a simple Lay-Brother of that austere Order, who demanded it of him in her Name. And thus he gave unto *Mary*, not only all that he had, but even himself too, to the Confusion of those who oftentimes refuse her a wretched Penny, which She begs of them, by the Mouth of some indigent Person. But perchance you are one of that happy Number, who by voluntary Poverty have already purchased a Right to the Kingdom of Heaven. If so, I will suggest to you another way of bestowing your Charities, more acceptable to *Mary* than the former, and more beneficial to your self. Give all the Satisfactory part of your good Works, to those suffering Souls in Purgatory, which are most in the Virgin's Favour. You cannot conceive how much you will be Gainer by this Liberality

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ality to *Mary*, in her Favourites. It is certain, that the Price which you lay down at present, for the Delivery of those future Princes of the Heavenly Court, will be put out to very good Interest, in the Hands of that great Queen of Heaven, who esteems her greatest Riches to consist in nothing so much as to be able to enrich others. *Ego in altissimis habito, ut ditem diligentes me, & Thesuros eorum repleam. Prov. 8, 71.*

Tenth Duty.

To receive H. Communion upon her Solemn Feasts.

IT is a Custom so universally practised by all Nations whatsoever, to Solemnize great Feasts with Banquets, that Feasting and Banqueting are now become synonymous, and signify the same Thing. If this be so, he must never pretend to enter into the Number of those, who glory in their partial Affections and Devotion to *Mary*, who does not Solemnize her Festivals,
with

with that heavenly Banquet, which the unspotted Lamb of God has prepared for us of himself, upon our Altars. *Mary* cannot be more highly Honoured, than when we Honour her in her Son *Jesus*. And indeed, how can he be said to shew any Respect to that Virginal Soil, which without humane Industry, and by the sole Influences of Heaven, gave us such divine Fruit, who refuses to Eat of that very Fruit so liberally offer'd, and so Divinely nourishing, as if it were distastful to him, and had neither Sweetness nor Virtue in it? Saint *Charles Borromeus* did so convince the People of his Time, of the Truth of what I have here said, that in *Milan*, the Feasts of our Lady could scarce be distinguish'd from Easter Day: So great was the Concourse of People to receive the most Holy Communion upon those Days.

Eleventh Duty.

To Imitate her Virtues.

W Here there is no Resemblance, there cannot be much Friendship : it being the Property of Love either to suppose , or to produce a sort of Likeness and similitude between the Persons that mutually Love each other. *Amor aut paret invenit aut facit.* Wherefore the only way to deserve the Virgin's constant Love, is to imitate her Virtues, and thereby to aim at such a perfect Resemblance with her in all our Behaviour , that there may be a perfect Union of Hearts and Actions between Her and Us. *Filia, si te mihi vis devincire, ama filium meum Iesum.* * Daughter, said the Virgin her self to her beloved St. *Brigide* , if thou wilt gain my Affections , Love my Son *Iesus*. Wherefore , the most acceptable Honour we can pay unto the Virgin , and which will certainly please her beyond all that has been hitherto mention'd , will be

to

* *S. Brig. in Revel.*

to take all occasions of imitating her , as near as we can , in the Exercife of all thofe Virtues , which ſhe her ſelf poſſeſſed in ſo eminent a Degree. *Margaret of Auſtria*, Daughter to *Maximilian the II.* and greater than the World it ſelf , which ſhe abandoned in the flower of her Age , being one Day enlighten'd with a more than ordinary Ray of divine Faith , to Underſtand how much the pretious Pearl of her Virginity, ſo much commended in the Gospels, was to be valued above all her other Jewels , made a generous Offering of it to the Virgin. And this Preſent was ſo gratefully accepted by the Queen of Virgins, that bending her Head from one of her Images , She was pleaſed to ſignify , in this ſenſible manner , her Thanks to the Donour of it. At this miraculous Teſtimony of the Virgin's Acceptance , the young Princeſs full of Aſtoniſhment, and in the Exceſs of her Joy, and heat of her Fervour , boldly gave her ſelf a wound in the Breſt, on the ſide of the Heart; and with the Blood that came from it , ſhe writ in the moſt authentick

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authentick Terms , her absolute Renunciation into the Hands of the great Mother of God , of her self, her Riches , her Kingdoms , and her Royal Nuptials , which were ambitiously sought for by the greatest Monarchs of Europe. And afterwards , no less faithful in maintaining her Promise than she had been liberal in making it , she retired into a Monastery of Discalced Carmelites in Spain , where she happily ended her days , under that Religious Habit , now far more glorious to her , than the Royal Robes she renounced. * He that has not a sufficient Stock of Virtue to make so great an Offering at once , let him begin with Things of lesser moment , and accustom himself to Mortification and Self denial in smaller matters , in order to inure himself hereafter to the Exercise of it in harder Things. Thus the Huntsmen rear up their young Hounds , by teaching them at first to bark at a Bear's skin , that when they are grown up , they may not be afraid to attack the Bear himself.

TWELFTH

* *Ion. à Palma , in ejus vitâ.*

Twelfth Duty.

*To abstain from some sinful Action
for her sake.*

A *Micus meus , Inimicus inimici mei.*
He that is my Friend , is an Enemy to my Enemy ; is an Axiom so generally receiv'd by all , that it even makes a Presumption in Law. And therefore , that implacable Enmity which passes between the Virgin and Sin , obliges all her Clients to profess a most singular Hatred and Aversion to that Monster of Hell. This shall be the last Exercise of Duty and Devotion towards the Bd. Virgin , which I shall propole to you , for your practice ; at least , as to the order in which I propose them , tho' not the last , but rather the first , in the Intention and whole Design of this little Book ; Since without it , we must never hope to lodge within our Hearts any true Devotion to our Lady , even tho' we should possess all the rest. The *Philistians* shew'd much Honour to the Ark of God.

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God. They placed it in their Temple: They conducted it with great Respect through their Territories: They enrich'd it with many Presepts: And yet, they received no Blessing from it, but rather on the contrary much Damage. The Reason of this, was, because together with the Ark, they were so foolish as to adore their own Idol, which was an Enemy to it. That the true Clients of this living Ark of God, the glorious Virgin *Mary*, may be thoroughly convinced, that to bend one Knee to Her, and the other to Sin, is not the way to deserve her Favour; but on the contrary, that there is no other way to merit her Protection, but by declaring open War to this monstrous Idol of Sin, her greatest Enemy; Let us, if you please, see an authentick Confirmation of this Truth, in a very memorable Adventure. A french Nobleman going, according to the Custom of those times, to make Trial of his strength and skill, at a solemn Turnament, happen'd to lodge by the way in the House of a Woman of no very good Repute;
Where

Where being extremely taken with the Daughter of the House, he presently offered a purse of gold to the Mother, that he might have her for his pleasure. I know not whether the young Man's Lust, or the Mother's Avarice had the greater Share in this infamous Bargain: This at least is certain, that the shameful Contract was agreed on, without the participation of the poor innocent Girl; Who finding her self basely betray'd and sold by her own Mother, and like the harmless Dove within the Hawk's Talions, seeing no way to escape, began to Tremble, to Cry out for help, to Lament, Weep, and even threaten the young Man, but all in vain. Till at length, gathering Courage from her very Fears, and presence of Mind from the Danger she was in; This day, said she, is Saturday: a Day consecrated to the Virgin Mary, whose Name I bear, and to whom I have offered my Virginity by Vow. How dare you offer to commit so many Sacriledges in one Act? At this confident way of speaking, the young Nobleman began to

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to enter into himself, and taking the Bridle again into his hands, which he had entirely let loose to his Violent Passion : So may the Virgin *Mary*, said he, be propitious to me, as I not only am willing to leave thee untouch'd, but moreover am resolved that the Mony which was design'd for the price of thy Virginity, shall serve to secure it from all future Danger ; And therefore I freely give it thee, to make up thy Fortune, the better to enable Thee to put in Execution the Vow thou hast made of being a Religious Woman : And thus the Nobleman staid three days longer in the same House, till the young Woman was receiv'd into a Monastery. From thence pursuing his first Design he went to the Turnament : Which indeed would have proved a very fatal Justing to him, if the Virgin had not interposed her whole Power in his favour. For at the breaking of a Lance, he unfortunately receiv'd a mortal Wound, and was thus passing without Confession into the other World; where he had been lost for all Eternity, unless the Virgin, in requital of
that

that generous Victory, which he had gain'd over himself, for her sake, (as she her self reveal'd to a holy Person) had not obtain'd for him, at that critical moment, a Contrition for his Sins so very perfect, that with it, as with a second Baptism, he entirely cancelled all the guilt of them, before he went to give an account of them. This is the Reward, which the great Mother of God is ready to bestow upon all those, who are generously resolved to fight against Sin for her sake. And he must certainly be very low-minded and faint-hearted, who neither for her sake, nor for his own Interest, will engage in a War so just. Who knows but that your Eternal Salvation may also depend one day, upon a Victory of this nature over some criminal Passion?

But here, Dear Reader and Loving Client of *Mary*, your Guide must leave you. *Hac est Via, ambulate in ea.* This is the way: Walk in it securely, and make great steps towards the Term you aspire to, and it will not be long before you arrive to a perfect and solid Devotion

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tion to the great and sovereign Queen of Heaven. I do not stay any longer with you, not but that I could most willingly entertain you more at large upon a Subject of so much Comfort; but because I must accommodate my self to the Humour of most Men, who generally love Brevity better than long Discourses, whatever the Subject be: Just as Physicians are often obliged to humour the Palate of their Patients, by distilling into one Single Remedy, the Juice and Virtue of many different Herbs. Accept therefore, within the narrow compass of these few Leaves, a much greater Desire of being Useful to you.

But Thou much more, Great Virgin, always Immaculate, accept in the same, a dutiful Offering from a Servant of thine so highly favoured by Thee. If Thou art an Ocean of Grace, receive within thy Bosom this small Rivulet, with the same Bounty with which Thou receivest those other Nobler Rivers which pay unto Thee their just Tribute of far greater Praises. This Book indeed is but little: But O, what

what a Volume would it swell to, if I were to add unto it the Sum of all those Mercies, Thou hast been pleased to shew to so Miserable a Sinner as I am! If I were able to give an account of them all, I should appear unto all thy Devout Clients, a living Book, written within and without, *Scriptus intus, & foris*, written in my Body, written in my Soul, with indelible Characters of Thousands of thy Favours. But, because this is not permitted me, it only remains, O Sovereign Lady, that together with my poor Gift, thou also accept of the Giver, and take both the Book and the Author for Instruments to promote thy Glory upon Earth: Weak Instruments, I own it, yet which in thy Hands, much more than the Jaw-bone of an Ass in the Hands of a *Samson*, will become not only strong, but even Victorious Weapons. If for Thy sake, I have here made my self a Guide to those pious Souls, who seek for Shelter under the Wings of thy Maternal Protection; Be thou likewise to me, I humbly beseech Thee, prostrate before the Throne

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of thy Greatness , a Guide and a
Safeguard, in the short Remainder of
this my mortal Pilgrimage. But much
more particularly I beg thy Cha-
ritable Assistance at the Hour of my
Death , to the end that by thy
Means, I may come one Day to see
Thee , my only Hopes next to *Iesus*,
to Love Thee , to enjoy Thee , and
to glorify Thee , for all Eternity.
Amen.

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Ex Dono F:

R. & P. Jure
merito suum proprium
sibi vindicat Seb:

Norris. Die 14.

March. An:

1740.

Mary's Client?

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